

SMITHS

JULY, 1916
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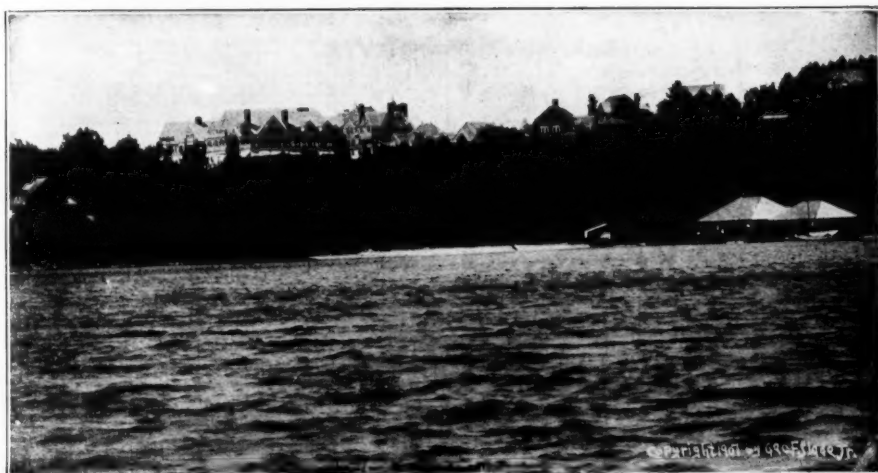
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Vol. XXIII

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 4

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

CONTENTS

FOR - JULY - 1916

West End Avenue—A Complete Novel . . . *Joseph Ernest* . . . 541
Illustrated by E. C. Caswell.

The Cost of Peace—An Essay *Emily Newell Blair* . . . 591

Motherhood and Mr. Roe—A Short Story . . . *Ralph Bergengren* . . . 593
Illustrated by Victor Perard.

"Let Me Dress You"—A Short Story . . . *Ruth Wright Kauffman* 601
Illustrated by Haygarth Leonard.

The True Romance *Genevieve Scott* . . . 611
A Story in Two Parts—Part I.
Illustrated by Mayo Bunker.

The Watchdog—A Short Story *Winona Godfrey* . . . 619
Illustrated by J. Henry.

Trouble—A Few Pages from Anne's Diary . . . *Mary Patterson* . . . 627
Illustrated by Harold Thomas Denison.

The Bright Hours Only—A Short Story . . . *Mae Van Norman Long* 633
Illustrated by R. Van Buren.

Return—A Poem *Mary Carolyn Davies* . . . 647

Ostracized—Serial *Helen R. Martin* . . . 649
Illustrated by Robert A. Graef.

The Calendar—A Poem *Stella Saxton* . . . 669

Prairie—A Poem *Jeannie Pendleton Hall* . . . 670

"Out In It"—A Tea-Table Discussion . . . *Hildegard Lavender* . . . 671
Illustrated by Laura E. Foster.

The Noblest Roman—A Short Story . . . *Mary Brent Whiteaide* . . . 677
Illustrated by Dan Sayre Groesbeck.

The Shining Adventure *Dana Burnet* . . . 689
A Two-Part Story—Part II.
Illustrated by Clarence Rowe.

Minor Physical Defects *Doctor Lillian Whitney* 715
Illustrated with Photographs.

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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 23

JULY, 1916

Number 4

West End Avenue

By Joseph Ernest

Author of "The Escapades of Jules Lacroix," "Zizi's Hat," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

The absorbing experiences of a young man in business and in love—a story of New York seen through the eyes of one of the most observant, human, and brilliant of our younger writers.

CHAPTER I.

JACK HEMENWAY closed a small, but poisonously intricate work on applied mathematics with a gasp of exhaustion. There are limits to the endurance even of the young, however vigorous in ambition; and a concentrated study of sines and tangents, following a grilling day at the works, had ended by leaving his brain in a condition resembling a shredded cereal food.

The nicked alarm clock that ticked noisily on his mantelpiece informed him that it was nearly eleven o'clock, a time when all aspiring young engineers should be asleep. He contemplated his bed with cold distaste.

It was of cheap brasswork, partially enameled in a rasping green, and it sagged notably in the center. With the exception of a mahogany table, a golden-oak bureau with a cracked mirror, and two extremely hard chairs, it constituted the whole of his furniture. There had been pictures, but as they were many degrees uglier than the furniture, he had placed them in the closet.

He would have been glad to relegate to the same obscurity the smudgy pink roses on his wall paper. Failing this, he had contrived to hide a number of them with photographs of his Charles-ton home. In the center, larger than the rest, was one of his mother gathering flowers in the garden of the old colonial house. In his present surroundings, the beauty of the bowered veranda caught him at the throat with an aching nostalgia. He was smitten with a sudden sense of loss at the thought that the kind eyes of the gray-haired woman in the photograph were closed forever, that strangers rocked on the creepered porch in the sweet Southern evenings.

He gazed gloomily out of his window upon the harsh, barren ugliness of lower West End Avenue. The hard, white electric lamps stared stonily on the littered sidewalks and pullulant tenements.

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Hemenway, as he looked out upon it all. "If this is all there is to life, what was I born for?"

To work all day in an office, to read or study at night or wander alone in streets sometimes deserted, sometimes crowded, but always as empty of possibilities of fellowship as an alkali waste, leaves a man at the end of six months a prey to the suspicion that life is cheating him. There arrives inevitably a moment of revolt. There comes a mood when he finds himself in antagonism to the established order. A certain type of young man becomes in that moment an embittered anarchist, thereby gravely affecting his chances of future usefulness and beatitude. The other sort goes out to seek a saloon.

Hemenway went out and bought a drink at a corner saloon in Columbus Circle. He did not want a drink; he did not even want to enter a saloon. In the Southern home he had so recently left, to have been seen in the act would have amounted to social suicide. But what he did desperately need was a glimpse of gayety, a note of human intercourse, an atmosphere of cheerfulness to soothe the mind he had racked to the limit of endurance. For a moment he tried to engage the barkeeper in casual conversation; but that white-coated slave so clearly regarded him as one of an endless line of faces whose sole business in life was to absorb beer and get out that Hemenway concluded not to press the attack.

He emerged from the place filled with a sudden blazing discontent. People passed him on the sidewalk, in autos, on packed street cars, as if he had been a disembodied spirit and not a human being, with all of a human being's need of fellowship. A swarthy, foreign-looking man, in a panama hat and cloth-topped shoes, whom he had casually overtaken, did indeed show signs of recognizing his existence. But it was only to the extent of scowling at him in open suspicion.

Hemenway felt that it would be a

keen pleasure to beat into the swarthy man's head a perception of the fact that he, John Hemenway, late of Charleston, South Carolina, was a young fellow of unstained record and some breeding and education, and withal an amiable and harmless fellow creature. He would gladly have reduced the swarthy features to a pulp in demonstration of this.

And at that moment a whimsical fate was arranging for him an opportunity to do precisely that thing.

He was in the act of turning into another saloon—though with diminished hopes, this time—when he was struck by some strangely familiar quality in the walk of a girl who was preceding him swiftly uptown. As she passed before the brilliant window of a cigar store, Hemenway noticed with what conspicuous neatness she was dressed. Her flat-brimmed white hat, set jauntily on one side, her white shoes and gloves, her blue-spotted summer frock with its black girdle, were all impeccable in their simple good taste.

She was walking with the swift, easy grace of the New York girl, shoulders squared and head proudly erect. She was not afraid to swing her arms a little, and her every step told of supple and controlled strength.

Something about her figure, too, seemed vaguely familiar to Hemenway. She was by no means willowy in outline. Her shoulders were broad, and her waist undulant in the untrammelled grace of her movement, but hardly to be called slender in measurement by inches. Under the brim of her hat a rich golden coil of hair surmounted a neck milk-white, round, and strong as a marble pillar. But with all her strength, she carried an indefinable suggestion of the thoroughbred.

As Hemenway halted behind her to light a cigarette, he was aware of a quick step on the sidewalk, and the swarthy stranger, with another darting



Hemenway seized him by the shoulder and sent him staggering back in the direction of the gutter.

glance of sidelong suspicion, hurried past him.

In a burst of speed, the man in the panama overtook the girl as she halted at a crossing to avoid an automobile. The same moment he spoke to her, softly and rapidly. Hemenway saw the yellow, catlike gleam of his teeth as he smiled. He saw the girl shrink aside and quicken her pace to reach the other side of the crossing.

At first Hemenway flushed with unreasoning jealousy, to see another man attempt the exact thing he had so

ardently desired to do himself, but had not dared. Then he had a reaction of unhallowed joy because the attack had met with appropriate failure. But when he observed that the man in the panama hat continued to dog the girl's footsteps, he became hot again with indignation.

He, also, quickened his pace. At the corner of the next block, when the swarthy man again approached the girl in the summer frock and spoke to her—this time raising his hat—Hemenway was but a few strides behind them.

The girl recoiled against a show window, looking about as if for some way of escape.

"The skunk!" muttered Hemenway.

All the exasperation of his evening's mood concentrated in white-hot detestation of the man. Suddenly lengthening his stride, he thrust himself between them, facing the foreigner.

"Beat it, you!" he snapped, with dangerous meaning. "Unless it's trouble you're looking for!"

"Ha!" exclaimed the swarthy man. "Who are you to say what I shall do? Are you, perhaps, the lady's——"

Before he could finish the sentence, Hemenway seized him by the shoulder and sent him staggering back in the direction of the gutter.

"You heard what I said!" he menaced. "Get scarce, or you won't have so many teeth!"

The swarthy man swung a hand to his hip pocket and thrust a face contorted with fury into Hemenway's.

"You be careful with me!" he choked. "Because I kill you!"

He added a word that, from one end of Broadway to the other, as well as on many other portions of the world's surface, is a signal on which men fight. There was a laugh at Hemenway's elbow, and he became conscious of a gathering knot of spectators.

Hemenway's principal fault was an explosive temper. It took sudden command, and, with a vicious dart of his right hand upward and outward, he buffeted his opponent full in the face with his open palm.

The spectators recoiled as the swarthy man picked himself up from the sidewalk, but they might have saved themselves the trouble. He produced from his pocket—somewhat to Hemenway's disappointment—not a gun, but a pink silk handkerchief, with which he caressed his features, spitting incoherent threats.

Hemenway dropped his hands as a

policeman came around the corner of the run. He was one of the newer, clean-cut order of New York policemen, the splendid, athletic young dandies who make it a habit to appear round the corner on the run.

In one second he detected Hemenway as the aggressor, and seized him by the arm, listening keenly to his rapid explanation. A man in the delighted audience corroborated.

"Tried to pull a bluff with a gun," said this gentleman, "and he got his. Coming to him, at that."

The policeman dropped Hemenway's arm and suddenly infolded the swarthy man in a bearlike hug, his long arms reaching around and scientifically tapping the fellow's clothes. Satisfied at length that they did not conceal a weapon, he left him, and took a fresh grip of his nightstick.

"On your way!" he commanded, waving it peremptorily. "You got yours, or I'd give you something meself, ye dirty loafer. And you," turning to Hemenway, "take your lady friend out o' here."

"She isn't my friend, officer," smiled Hemenway.

"I said to take her off'n my beat!" snapped the policeman, pointing with his club. "G'wan along, now, before I pull the both av yez inside!"

He grabbed Hemenway and the girl by their arms, and propelled them together sharply in the general direction of Albany. There was simply nothing to do but obey. Hemenway took the girl's arm and led her rapidly across Broadway.

CHAPTER II.

"Didn't you recognize me, Mr. Hemenway?" asked the girl at his side, in a frank and pleasing voice.

For the first time she raised her face to his so that the broad hat brim no longer concealed her features. Hemen-

ray found himself looking into a pair of the truest, bluest eyes in the world.

"I was afraid for you," she said. "I thought the man had a gun."

"Why, it's little Susie!" he exclaimed. "I thought it was——"

He stopped, just in time.

"Who did you think it was?" smiled the girl.

He had no words to explain. The fact was that he had imagined her to be a "lady," and she was none other than the quick-lunch waitress who hustled his midday meal in one of the hugely economical, overpoweringly sanitary restaurants on lower Broadway.

"Thought you were a stranger," he concluded lamely. "I've been walking behind you for blocks and wishing I might speak to you—and all the time we were quite old friends. Isn't it absurd? But you see, Sue, I never saw you before except in that stiff white waist with the black bow that they make you wear at the Sunshine Restaurant."

"I always thought you were too proud to speak," laughed the girl. "Or too shy, maybe. You looked like you wanted to talk—I could feel you watching me every time I came to the ice-water fountain; I could feel it in the back of my neck—but you never cracked nothing."

"Would you have liked me to talk to you?"

"Why, of course I would!" cried the girl, turning her frank eyes up to his. "Couldn't you tell? Most men aren't so blind. Why, lots of them spend all their time looking for the chances I've been giving you."

"I'm in a hurry in the daytime," Hemenway apologized. "But I'm glad I met you to-night. I couldn't go to bed for the lack of some one friendly to bid me good night."

"That's the way I was feeling. I've been out in Long Island to see—to see friends. It was a long, lonesome jour-

ney back, and I just hated going straight home to the same old room. I live on West End Ave."

"You mean 'avenue,'" smiled Hemenway, the purist, as they turned down a side street. The girl had pronounced the word to rhyme with "pave".

"I should think not!" retorted Susie merrily. "That's for the swells. Where I live, it's just plain 'ave'. You have to walk north for blocks before you come to the avenue."

The distinction amused Hemenway. "Then I guess I live in the 'ave' myself," he said. "It's pleasant to know we're neighbors."

"Yes, ain't it?" said Susie with enthusiasm, and took his arm.

Somehow the gloved hand resting on his sleeve thrilled Hemenway like an electric shock.

At the entrance to an apartment block near his own, she stopped and withdrew her arm.

"This is where I live," she said. "And up there's the real avenue."

He looked up West End Avenue in the direction of her finger. The contrast made him catch his breath. In the clear, lovely night the abrupt transition from squalor to palatial luxury—perhaps the most startling of Manhattan's many contrasts—presented itself more vividly than ever before.

For three blocks ahead were mean and dirty stores, boxlike flats and tenements with narrow windows showing gray curtains or no curtains at all, littered sidewalks, and odorous gutters. And beyond, as if you walked in a single stride out of one world into another, stretched a broad and stately avenue lined as far as the eye could reach with towering, gorgeous apartment houses flanked by gracious trees, with patches of trim green lawn before them and pale, dignified lamps at the entrances. In the night air the great buildings took on an infinite variety of soft pastel shades, and here and there a

ruby gleam showed from a window or a lamp in the roadway. And away at the end, a patch of sky glowed like burnished jade, showing up the distant buildings as if they had been cut out of black paper.

The serene and solemn beauty of the view held them both silent and spell-bound for a space.

"I simply can't go home to-night," said Hemenway at last, with a sigh of indefinable unrest. "Would you care to walk up the avenue a little way?"

"Thanks," assented the girl simply. "It handed me a jolt—that man following me. My nerves are a bit on the jump. I guess I couldn't sleep, anyway."

For the best part of a mile they encountered nobody but a policeman, juggling his nightstick to keep himself awake. Soon they were walking, hand in hand, as children do, Susie caroling lightly from time to time in the sheer happiness of companionship. Covertly watching her, Hemenway was amazed at her feminine capacity to live in the moment, her frank joy in lights and colors and trees, in the sweet night breeze that flicked the tendrils of her burnished hair, in the lithe and tireless movements of her strong young body.

"Sue, what time did you start work this morning?" he demanded.

"Oh, eight o'clock, as usual. Why?"

"Then it's high time we turned back to bed," he answered. "You must have been on your feet for sixteen hours, and that's far too long in the hot weather."

She halted, unheeding.

"Say, wait a minute, here's a new one," she urged, pointing across the street to a giant building of tapestry brick, newly reared amid the old, rapidly disappearing brownstone houses. A large sign intimated that the apartments were ready for occupation.

"Eleven rooms, five baths," recited

Susie; and in a hushed and reverent voice, she added, "Gee!"

"The bloated plutocrats!" commented Hemenway. "But let them make the most of their bathrooms—I'm well after them." He smiled proudly down at Susie. "I guess it won't be so long before I move into the avenue myself," he said grandly. "You see, in three weeks I shall be a qualified engineer. It's been rough, living in the 'ave—I've had to set my back teeth hard together to stand it—but it's nearly over now."

"Then I shan't see you much longer," sighed the girl.

"I'm not so sure about that," was Hemenway's quizzing reply.

They walked home in thoughtful silence. When they said good night at the door of her home, the girl appeared a little serious and wistful.

"It's like all life, the avenue," she said. "It goes straight on, through all sorts of ups and downs—straight on to the sea."

Her hand was in his, and she was gazing up at him with some vague appeal in her big, honest eyes. Even at night the vivid blue of her eyes was astonishing. Hemenway was struck by her comparison of the avenue to the human pilgrimage. The more he thought of it, the more apt it seemed—small and puny beginnings, developing gradually into power and dignity and opulence; a sudden slump into decrepitude and decay; and at the end the illimitable sea.

He was filled with a consciousness of the inexorable flight of time, wrung with a sudden indefinable longing.

"Are you mean?" asked the girl, her blue eyes searching his for something they feared was not there. "Or are you just slow?"

Slowly and with boyish awkwardness, moved by some strangely novel impulse, he clasped her waist in his arms and bent his face to hers.

"By all means, if you insist," he said.

Her firm young arms stretched around his neck, her big soft lips met his squarely and unafraid. In a sudden passionate burst of feeling he lifted her, big, strong young woman as she was, clean off her feet.

"God, Susie, it's no use!" he whispered. "I love you, dear! I've loved you since the first day I saw you!"

"My darling, my darling!" gasped the girl repeatedly, returning his kisses in a kind of ecstasy, her eyes bright with happy tears. In that sudden storm burst, all barriers were carried away. Their hungry young hearts beat against each other, drinking their fill of the love and intimate comradeship of which they had been starved. At last, quite abruptly, the girl broke away from him and fled lightly up the dark and narrow stairway.

From his window, a few moments later, Hemenway looked out upon the "ave". Its brutal noises were stilled, its squalid population wrapped in slumber. Above began the lovely vista of the avenue, its tiny colored lights gleaming in promise through the friendly trees.

"Yes, it's all life," said Hemenway, "and it's all good. I was a coward to complain."

CHAPTER III.

Conceivably there is no more typically American institution than the Sunshine Company, operators of the long line of restaurants that employed Susie Trainor. All over the land they are dotted in uniform profusion, dispensing primarily celerity and a meticulous cleanliness, and, in a secondary degree, things to eat. They are big and wide and lofty, white as a bathroom, one glare of polished marble and porcelain from end to end. In their size and aggressive sanitation they are typical of the spacious wholesomeness of the na-

tional life, as in their cookery they typify its youth and indomitable digestive powers.

The branch Hemenway visited often held six hundred people at the lunch hour, and there was a tremendous fascination for him about the movements of the waitresses in their white uniform, with its trim collar and severe black bow. How they sped back and forth on their tireless young feet, wasting not a word or a movement in this ordered, almost automatic business of feeding a suddenly descending multitude! How calm and sure of themselves they were, how swift and accurate, how miraculously even-tempered!

In the period before he had known Susie, he had been wont to watch her from the tables of an Irish-American girl with big, solemn gray eyes, who would approach his table with the haughty carriage of a duchess at a court drawing-room and, with a lightning sweep of her hand, disarrange the stiff black curls that he had had so much trouble in brushing flat.

"Looks better that way," she would say. "It was too slick. Whatcha want—three up and one on the dark?"

And she would glide away without having moved a muscle of her face, to return with wheat cakes and black coffee.

Having once definitely succumbed to Susie Trainor's blue eyes, however, he transferred himself to a table where she might wait upon him, and sat there daily. He had hoped to effect the change without attracting attention, but in this he had failed to reckon with the Irish girl's sense of humor.

"Don't you have nothing to say to that chemical blonde," she advised gravely, on the first occasion of his transference. "If you get one of her hairs in the soup, it'll dope you."

"This here is my friend, Harold Vanderbilt," retorted Susie, as she placed a glass of ice water for him. "If you

get new with him, he'll buy the joint and tie a can to you."

The lynx-eyed floor manager in the linen coat passed suspiciously, detected no expression on the girls' faces but one of businesslike alertness, and moved on his rounds in calm content.

The Irish girl, with a glance of humorous reproach at Hemenway, suddenly and completely disarranged his hair with a lightning sweep of her hand, departing with habitual hauteur to her own tables. It had been one of the griefs of Hemenway's young life that women would not let his hair alone. Now Susie stood at attention behind his chair, and he was safe.

"I'm off at two-thirty. Tomato soup?" said Susie.

"I guess—yes. I'll meet you at the subway entrance."

And in the moment while she leaned over his chair, as he affected to glance at the menu, he felt her smooth white fingers arranging his sorely ruffled locks. For the first time in his experience, the sensation was not objectionable. On the contrary, her touch communicated to him an unaccountable galvanic shock, a novel thrill that made his heart leap within him and then miss a beat with a curiously disturbing effect of syncope.

On a day three weeks later, the general manager of his firm, a large, handsome man who sat cozily curled up in an upholstered swivel chair, purring like a stout tomcat, summoned Hemenway before him and made him director of supplies.

"You've got it in front of you," said the manager, whose name was Lishman. "We regard you as one of our rising young men. Take a quiet, restful weekend and go to it. You'll have to work like the devil to pull it into shape."

And he lit a cigar and departed in his auto for a round of golf.

Hemenway walked into the Sunshine Restaurant on air that afternoon. He

sat in a glow of content, watching Susie finish her last hour of duty with a spurt. That swift, smooth carriage of hers, that proud, strong tilt of the head, had never before seemed so wonderful.

There was one of the women customers, also, who seemed to be taking a peculiar interest in the personality of Susie. She was a dowager of a type sufficiently familiar in Manhattan, big, bouncing, and gray-haired. She had contrived to become middle-aged while retaining the features of an infant; she succeeded in being hugely stout and at the same time by no means unshapely. Her plain blue silk costume was of the intense simplicity of design that is more costly than mere flounces and furbelows, and she filled it out as if it had been inflated under pressure. Around her wide eyes and tiny mouth of the schoolgirl, if you looked closely, you could see wrinkles that gave her a sort of dignity.

She stirred a cup of coffee nervously and watched Susie move to and fro without remission. Finally she assumed a pair of delicate eyeglasses to assist her vision. When Susie passed her table once, on her way to the wheat-cake "foundry" near the door, the woman spoke to her with authority.

He saw Susie halt and start as she recognized the voice. He watched them exchange a bare half dozen sentences. For the first time since he had known her, he saw a cloud gather on the girl's smooth brow.

She drew herself up, her white hands doubled into fists, her strong young chin tilted in defiance. Something she said appeared to have the effect of sudden deflation on the dowager. She dropped her eyeglasses and tossed her head angrily.

Hemenway rose and made for the door. Near the wheat-cake "foundry" he encountered Susie, her arms full of



"I'm off at two-thirty. Tomato soup?" said Susie.

plates and an air of sunny triumph about her.

"What's biting the stout lady?" he asked.

Susie broke into a dimpled smile.

"She's mad as a wet hen because I told her to mind her business and leave me mind mine," she answered. "When I want good advice, I guess I can ask for it. See you at the subway corner."

She was standing in the full blaze of sunlight through the enormous plate-glass front of the restaurant, and as she turned her face to gaze after him, Hemenway had a glimpse of her eyes that was destined to remain in his memory while he lived.

Susie's coloring might have been copied from an art poster. Her hair was a warm, burnished yellow, her lips

as red as ripe raspberries, her neck white and smooth as cream; but her eyes in the sunlight were the brightest, purest blue that he had ever seen—bluer than the deepest water, bluer than the clearest Southern sky.

He found himself, dazed and hesitating, among the hurrying Saturday crowds on the Broadway sidewalk. Recovering himself with an effort, he sauntered slowly toward the subway entrance.

"God, what a girl!" he thought. "And I used to josh the fellows who said they were in love!"

Some one from behind seized his elbow and jerked him authoritatively to one side. Staring round in astonishment, ready to resent what he conceived to be an intolerable liberty on the part

of another man, he found himself looking into the wide, infantile eyes of the lady in blue silk. He controlled his tongue in the nick of time and touched his hat in apology.

The stout lady took not the slightest notice of him. She sailed by in heavy majesty, the hurrying workaday crowd parting before her. She had the air of one who habitually, as of right, pushed people out of her path if they did not save her the trouble by jumping out of it. As she reached the curb, a tall and expensive chauffeur touched his cap, holding open the door of a long-bodied town carriage.

The large dowager came to rest in the rear seat, where she sat bolt upright, inflating herself dangerously and quivering with dignity.

Hemenway was struck by the incongruity of such a visitor at the Sunshine Restaurant.

"Looks to me," he laughed, watching the great car sweep up Broadway, "as if young Sue had succeeded in offending somebody of unusual importance."

He quickly forgot the incident in his impatience to meet Susie. It was an impatience so keen that, as he lounged and watched for her at the subway entrance, he felt as if half of his physical being had been amputated.

In a few minutes she appeared around the corner, her jaunty white hat aslant, her white shoes tripping firmly over the sidewalk, her summery skirts swinging as she hurried toward him.

They turned arm in arm down Broadway, and he was suddenly and surprisingly made whole. It was as if two halves of his being had been reunited.

His senses became abnormally acute. The presence of Susie at his side made the gentle breeze as exhilarating as champagne. It made the sunlight more gorgeous, the horses marvels of strength and stature, the automobiles magic chariots sounding joy trumpets.

The mighty façades of the stores and hotels in Herald Square sparkled with a hundred details and tints of unsuspected charm. The beauty of the girl at his side opened his eyes to the beauty of the world he lived in, and his heart sang within him at the inspiration to courageous effort of the hard, high eagerness of its rhythmic life.

"A city of steel and stone," he said. "A city without a heart—but there's something fine and splendid about it, just the same."

"If you stop here to rubber," observed Susie, her hand shyly tightening on his arm, "we'll miss the early train. Then you'll have to wait for the Hick Limited, and you won't like that."

He had a momentary sensation of disappointment that she did not enter into his feelings. But her eyes were a wonderful blue, faithful and tender and adoring. Obediently he came back to earth and walked on toward the Pennsylvania Station, serenely content.

CHAPTER IV.

The Long Island beach to which they were transported consisted of a few streets of villas, a railway station, and a mile or two of board walk. They traveled there, after the manner of the lordly working population of the metropolis, in a swift and airy electric train, clean swept and sanitary as the Sunshine Restaurants themselves.

As a preliminary to sea bathing, they fortified themselves with ice-cream soda at one of the hotels—a temerity permitted to youth. The girl's rich beauty sparkled and glowed in the keen sea breeze that wafted itself through the screened windows. Opening her hand bag in search of a powder puff, she disclosed a double handful of nickels and dimes.

Hemenway exclaimed at the sight of this astonishing hoard.

"Tips," she explained, showing her

dimples. "I didn't have time to get them changed into kale."

Somehow the idea cast a shadow upon his happiness.

"Susie, I wonder you don't find something nicer to do," he said diffidently. "Something, I mean, that would be more—tony. With your intelligence—"

"It's because I need the money," laughed the girl. "There's no other way I could earn so much, even if I worked for years."

"We have lots of stenographers who get fifteen or eighteen dollars a week at the office."

"Maybe. But there's many weeks I rake off nearly twenty dollars, all in nickels and dimes. Then we get wages, of course, on top of that. I've made thirty dollars a week often, in the winter. The little clerks and stenographers who lunch at the Sunshine envy us, Jack. There's plenty of them who would swap jobs gladly if they could stand up to the work. It's tough, you know. You have to be pretty strong to hold a job down at the Sunshine."

The revelation took Hemenway aback. He had not dreamed that Susie and her class were among the working-girl plutocrats of Manhattan, earning an income that he himself, a few weeks before, would have regarded with respect.

And he reflected that if she had not been a waitress, he would never have had a chance of meeting her. He rose to take her to the bathhouse, almost reconciled to five-cent tips.

On the other side of the board walk, beyond the line of wheel chairs, was a stretch of silver sand, deep and luxurious. Presently he emerged from a tunnel under the boards, clad in a blue bathing suit, and sat on the warm sand to wait for Susie. When at last she appeared, gayly smiling, holding out a hand to him in invitation to the surf, he was paralyzed by the wonder of her.

In her white linen uniform she was a notably fine young woman. In her street costume she was a big, jolly, handsome girl—the sort most men would steal a second glance at. But Susie in a natty blue bathing costume, with a saucy bright-green bathing cap dangling piratically over one ear, a bright touch of black and white stripes here and there—this was a different Susie altogether!

Most men and women have secret reasons to be grateful for clothing. The fact was that to Susie Trainor the necessity of conventional attire amounted to a serious injustice. She might have been accounted too big in a tailor costume, but in bathing dress she was superb; and she not only knew it, but was unaffectedly delighted by the knowledge.

Both were strong swimmers, and in a moment they were beyond the particular fringe of people lining the water's edge and clinging to the life lines. The beach shelved rapidly, and the cessation of the undertow soon told him that they were in deep water.

Susie swam like a water nymph and dived like a seal, leading him out to sea with an almost effortless grace that seemed to have something in it of magical quality—something curiously at one with the sea and the sky and the sunlight that sparkled on her white arms as she cleaved the waves.

In an interval for rest on the sands, they discussed Hemenway's sudden rise in the world.

"I expect it won't be long before you find out that I'm not class enough for you," said Susie, a passing shadow obscuring her dimples.

Hemenway pursued her into the water revengefully. The thing developed into a race. At last he measured the distance that separated them from the beach and its tiny dotted bathers, and declined to swim farther. They were already as far from the

shore as it was reasonable to go. He rolled lazily on his back and floated.

"Fraid cat!" cried the girl, and splashed him with her feet.

He pounced suddenly upon her, forging through the water with a swinging double overarm stroke, as one would tackle a polo player. But the leap fell short. Like a flash she was off again in advance of him, her white arms flashing tirelessly, her limbs crossing and parting in the most approved scissor stroke.

He made no doubt of overhauling her and compelling her to turn shoreward. It was only after several stern minutes of effort that he was constrained to admit that the girl was a swifter swimmer than he was himself.

"Come back!" he shouted, and floated, gasping.

Susie's answer was a laughing cry of triumph. He watched the bobbing green cap recede and grow smaller and smaller, calling upon it in vain to stop. The rounded, glistening arms curved over with tireless regularity. With growing concern he saw that, whether through the intoxication of her contact with nature, or a mere spirit of bravado, she was daringly risking her life.

And then, so suddenly that his heart leaped, the arms ceased their steady sweep. The green cap floated alone on the waves, a mere speck, inert and lifeless. With a violent gathering of forces, he set himself to swim seaward once more.

He might have summoned life guards, a boat, a dozen strong, fresh swimmers to his aid. Strangely enough, the idea occurred to him, only to be rejected automatically. The challenge was one personal to himself. Out there was his own woman, his mate, the girl he loved. In a flash he knew that he would save her or die with her.

The tiny splash of vivid green on the waves ahead, became the goal of his

existence. Every moment of his life and every instinct of his training seemed to culminate in the racking effort he put forth to reach it.

When he shook his eyes free at the crest of a wave, he found himself wondering whether the pathetic little shred of rubbered silk floated alone. He put down his head and swam fiercely, spurred by the fear that the bright blue eyes that had derided him below it, a few moments before, might now be staring upward at him from the depths. Once, in the agony of his heart, he cried out to her:

"Susie! Are you there?"

The green cap floated over a wave crest in silence. He plunged through the water in a final frenzy of effort.

The next moment he cried out in triumph as his fingers closed on a cool, soft arm, and he knew that Susie still floated beneath her pirate cap. She had turned her back to the shore, and her face was twisted in the agony of cramp.

"Thank God!" he gasped. "Can you keep up?"

The girl, too near the end of her forces to speak, made an almost imperceptible movement of her head in response. He saw with bewilderment that in her narrowed eyes there was a look of mysterious joy underlying the pain.

He grasped her under the arms and set himself, with long, slow movements, to the dogged, interminable swim back to the beach.

It was with the last flicker of his expiring strength that he helped her to stagger through the surf to the safety and warmth of the sands, where he promptly fell prone and speechless.

He came to his senses to find Susie holding a flask to his lips, and presently revived sufficiently to reassure a knot of bathers, who had gathered round them to stare solicitously. His principal sensation was one of relief

at the thought that, if Susie had proved herself more than his equal in speed, he had at least outlasted her in endurance.

He rolled over on the warm sand to look at her. To his astonishment, she appeared to have come through no more severe ordeal than some vigorous and stimulating exercise. The warm pink flush of perfect well-being was on her cheeks; to her vital young womanhood it was clearly a natural adventure to creep up to the portals of death and return smiling and unafraid.

He reflected with wonder upon the fact that in the ordinary course of existence young women did this all the time.

In the girl's eyes, as she watched over him, there was a new quality of tender proprietorship. She seemed gently, but inexorably, to have appropriated him as the prize of some mysterious contest.

"What made you do it, Susie?" he demanded, raising himself on an elbow.

"Oh, I just wanted to see," she replied, with a kind of penitent happiness.

"But you might have been drowned," persisted Hemenway. "What on earth did you want to see?"

"If you would take a dare."

"But why? I don't understand."

"Well," said the girl, considering him with melting eyes, "I just wanted to know; that was all."

Hemenway sank back on the sand, despairing of any light on the secret nature of women. His outstretched hand met hers, and, at the contact, a current of new life seemed to flow through his veins; so that presently he sat up definitely refreshed, rubbing his long, flat leg muscles, which had begun to ache vividly.

It dawned upon him that a newer and closer tie bound them than had existed up to that moment. Grave as the incident might have been, its principal

importance was that it had involved an exhibition of his deepest feelings with regard to Susie. He felt in his heart that its effect had been to make him, in some curious way, responsible for her future existence.

CHAPTER V.

They dined almost in silence at a secluded table in one of the picturesque little restaurants, where the cooling evening breeze fanned them through a window that opened directly on the sea, and the snappy music of the orchestra could not entirely drown the serener song of the breakers.

Later they strolled, still silent, along the board walk, under the sweet night sky. Hemenway felt that their relations had reached a stage where they required to be put into words and duly ratified, but no appropriate expression occurred to him. So they wandered on in delicious languor past the long line of wheel chairs, until the little shops and restaurants, with their pretty festooned fairy lamps and nonsense music, were far behind.

"Let's sit down here," said Hemenway. And Susie sat down obediently at his side.

And at once, without any adequate reason at all, they found themselves clinging to each other in a sort of paroxysm, and the girl was sobbing her heart out on his shoulder.

"My boy, my darling!" she gasped. "I might have drowned you out there!"

This possibility seemed to have presented itself to her as an afterthought.

"My dear!" murmured Hemenway, raising her face to his. He struggled for words to soothe her. "My wife!" he said at last. "Thank God I found you!"

He felt the splendid form in the muslin frock start and quiver in his arms, and bent to kiss the soft lips that were raised hungrily to his.

That evening, at any rate, they walked hand in hand through Eden, journeying homeward in a golden beatitude more intense than Hemenway had ever known. In his youth and optimism he confidently expected that it would endure, once attained, unto all eternity.

It endured precisely the length of time required to conduct Susie Trainor to her home and to say good night on the stoop. Again he whispered, as she clung to him and would not let him go: "My dear wife!"

Her blue eyes burned under the hard electric light with a feverish exaltation, and again he felt her tremble in his arms.

"Listen, Jack, you mustn't say that. At least, you mustn't say it yet! You mustn't even think of me that way till we know each other better. There's a lot of things——"

"There's nothing that matters but you," he replied in happy confidence.

The girl looked searchingly up into his face, a mute pleading in her eyes.

"I don't know," she murmured, and convulsively her fingers tightened on his shoulder. "There's something I must tell you. I ought to have told you before."

She burst into soft, rapid explanation.

"Jack dear, it was wicked of me. I should have told you at first. I knew how it would be—I knew the time would come when I'd have to tell you. Every day I've put it off has only made it worse. I've got a baby, Jack!"

"You—— Good God!" said Hemenway, under his breath.

"A little girl, the dearest, cutest little girl you ever saw. I'm a widow, dear. My husband died nearly three years ago. I was married when I was seventeen."

She stopped, shocked beyond expression by his tortured face.

"Don't look like that, Jack!" she pleaded. "I've never loved any man

the way I love you. I just didn't know—I was fresh from school. You're the first man I ever really loved. That's why I couldn't tell you. Oh, I know I've been wicked. I schemed and planned to get you from the very first. I was so lonesome! I wanted to make you love me before I told you. I knew that you'd find out sooner or later. Listen, Jack, if you'll just think it over for a spell, it won't hurt so bad! Lots of men marry widows. I swear I never loved my husband like I love you, Jack! My darling, tell me it don't matter—tell me you don't care?"

"You poor kid!" said Hemenway hoarsely. He gulped down something hard and dry in his throat. Her soft arms strained at his neck; her eyes pleaded as it might have been for life itself. "It was rather a jolt, you know," he added, with a wry smile.

And then he did what any man would do who held in his arms a splendid, pleading creature with whom he was passionately in love. He kissed her wet face and assured her over and over again that he did not care; that no consideration of the past or future could part them or cause him to love her one iota less; that, in short, nothing could possibly matter while Susie remained Susie and was truly his own.

But as he crossed the "ave" and ascended with aching limbs to his own abode, he knew in his soul that it did matter profoundly. The most diabolical ingenuity could have inflicted on him no crueller shock; no bright romance could have been more disastrously shattered. He had fallen in an instant out of his golden dream of Venus rising from the waves, to find himself on a squalid sidewalk, holding in his arms a weeping quick-lunch waitress, who told him ungrammatically that she had been a wife and mother before he had met her. The blow sickened him to the soul.

Spent with fatigue as he was, he

paced his tawdry room in a whirling mental torment. Try as he would to view the position reasonably, wave after wave of black jealousy continually arose to sweep him back from a sane foothold.

It was jealousy of a dead man. But what did it matter that the man was dead—now? Hemenway was young, with his illusions undimmed, his ideals still utterly unrelated to the facts of living—and his goddess had revealed herself as a very mortal woman. Even when he threw himself in exhaustion on the dingy bed, it was to ache in every nerve with the shock of realization.

Every fiber of his being cried out for Susie Trainor with a need that was itself a torment; and simultaneously every instinct of his soul revolted from the thought of the man who had possessed her, from the thought that somewhere the child of their union was growing up—compounded of his dead rival's features and character, carrying on his rivalry by a hundred little inherited traits of voice and gesture, forever thrusting into their romance the barrier of his disruptive personality.

And when at last he slept, it was to dream that somewhere in his grave that unknown rival stirred and woke, to smile in grisly triumph.

He arose the next morning with an overpowering recollection of calamity. It was Sunday—a day he had always met with loathing since his arrival in the metropolis, until Susie's comradeship had made it a day of precious moments, to be spent with almost miserly care. Now he found that the thought of meeting her was painful.

In the afternoon he dressed to cross the "ave" in search of her, according to his custom, and for a time sat on the edge of his bed, hat in hand, unable to start. In a little while, however, the horrible isolation of a Sunday without Susie—adorned with tormenting

thoughts of her grieving alone on the other side of the "ave," stricken by his defection—aroused in him a lively terror. It ended by sweeping him out into the "ave."

There was no doubt of it, the girl had made sure of him, even as she had said. The frightful void in his life that she had filled refused to be again torn open. He was no longer, in effect, a free man.

He ascended the creaking stairway in dark depression. Susie was seated in her tiny room, dressed and ready to go out, very smart and fresh in her white hat and summery frock.

She rose to meet him with an air of glad relief, as if some intolerable load of suspense had fallen from her. At the first searching glance of her eyes, Hemenway's heart melted within him.

"Jack dear, how pale you are!" said Susie.

He took her in his arms and kissed her.

"It's all right, Sue. You jarred me a little, you know. But I couldn't live without you now. Let's get out."

They strolled up West End Avenue, among the plutocracy of many bathrooms.

"I could afford to live there now," he told Susie, indicating one of the newer buildings, a pretty confection of tapestry brick. Creepers hung from its window boxes, and clipped plane trees stood before its cool, tasteful portals.

"Why don't you?" asked the girl. "I know how you hate the 'ave,' Jack, and its noises and dirt and smells. You would work a whole lot better. And if you took quite a small place at first, it wouldn't be too expensive."

"By George, I'll do it!" said Hemenway.

The idea took entire possession of him, and all afternoon they talked of little else. It was not until later, when they wandered out of the brilliance of



He controlled his tongue in the nick of time and touched his hat in apology.

Broadway into a side street where Hemenway knew a "chop-suey" parlor, that they reverted to the painful subject of the previous evening.

The place was of a pattern with the countless others of its kind in the city—a mere bare room with a few pearl-inlaid tables, and a few carved chairs in fretwork alcoves, the whole rescued from somberness by a brilliant screen or two, showing dragons of the Flowery Land. In deference to American sentiment, there was also a large and brilliant cash register; but the atmos-

phere of the place, in its air of resigned desuetude, was entirely Oriental. Even the Chinese waiter who gave them tea in a large basin moved noiselessly on felt slippers, and appeared faintly to resent the intrusion of customers.

"Tell me about it, Sue," said Hemenway, when the laconic Chinese had effaced himself behind the cash register.

"Oh, that!" The girl's bright face fell.

"There ain't—there isn't much to tell, Jack. He was a race-track man—more'n half a crook, I know now, but I was only seventeen, and I would have married him if he'd been the worst man in the world. In a way, he was the best, my Lant was! He was the kindest, bravest, tenderest man in the world. But sometimes he came home with thousands of dollars in his pocket from Belmont Park or some other place. How he got it Heaven only knew—I never dared to ask."

She played with her tea-

cup reminiscently.

"Then one day I noticed how he was getting so thin, his collars were too big for him. He began to cough a good deal, and first thing I knew a doctor ordered him off to Saranac. It was rapid consumption. I went with him, but it was only to see him die. One night he felt so much better that he talked of going back to New York in a few weeks. But he was gone before I realized it—early the next morning. I wouldn't believe he was dead. He didn't look like he was dead."

She sipped her tea, studying the leaves in the cup.

"Little Dallas was just a year old then," she added. "She's nearly four now—little Miss Husky, all right."

"Where is she?" asked Hemenway.

"Out on Long Island with some folks I know. I used to go over to see her twice a week, until I met you. I was coming back from there that first night we met, when you had that fuss with the foreigner. Of course I have to pay for her. Lant—my husband—didn't leave much money. We'd spent it pretty well as fast as it came. So you see I had to go right to work."

"But hadn't you any friends who could help?"

"Only my Aunt Mawford. But she gave me the frozen go-by when I married Lant. She said I had made my own bed, and would have to lie on it. So when he died, I never cracked nothing to her. Some way she found out. I guess she must have saw—must have seen me when she drove past the Sunshine windows. That was Aunt Mawford, the stout woman in blue that pushed you out of her way."

"You didn't appear to be exactly propitiatory," smiled Hemenway.

"Not much! She wanted to pull the 'told-you-so' stuff, and I wouldn't stand for it. Lant wasn't all he might have been, but he was a man, a real man, brave and kind-hearted, and he wouldn't have let a draft blow on me while he could stand in the way of it. I just couldn't hear her knock him. I don't worry about earning my own living. I like it."

Hemenway studied her broad shoulders and strong, round neck, and had to admit that she had made the best possible use of her gift of matchless physique in the emergency that had confronted her. Then his glance met her proudly tilted face, with its brave eyes and firm chin, and he felt a delicious pang of pride that the girl he loved

should be so courageous and wholesome.

"Susie, when I move out of the 'ave' into the avenue," he said, "I want to take you with me altogether. Will you come?"

But the girl shook her head, regarding him gravely.

"It wouldn't be square," she replied. "Don't tempt me, Jack. I've tried every way to get you, and now I can have you, I don't dare—not yet. You're miles above me. If you were going to be always a poor man, it would be different. I'd marry you to-night! I've never longed for anybody like I long for you. But you're slated for something big; you're going bang up to the top of the tree. There's little Dallas, too. You'd be tying yourself to another man's child as well as his widow, for I couldn't leave her with strangers forever, could I? She's growing up now."

Hemenway's heart sank at the reminder.

"You see! You must go ahead, Jack, and make sure of your success. And when you feel tired or discouraged, you can run down to the 'ave' and find me, and I'll be there to fix you up and send you back fresh and fit. And when you've made good and solid, if you still want me——"

"If I still want you!" exclaimed Hemenway. "How could I do without you now?"

"Then you'll find me still waiting for you and loving you, Jack—my Jack! I'll never look at another man. But you've lots to do, and lots to learn—and you've got to be very sure. I won't soon forget the look on your face—last night, when I told you. I knew then how wicked I'd been—I ought to have told you at first. But I was afraid to drive you away, and I wanted you so. Now, I'm afraid again. I don't want you to have anything to reproach me with."

Hemenway reflected a while, and straightway there confronted him the looming adversary of the day's work, the new job that would require his whole attention and his undivided strength.

"Well, you belong to me, at any rate," he said.

"Every bit of me," replied Susie.

"And I belong to you."

"I hope so," answered the girl wistfully. "And your new job is waiting for you, so we'll let it go at that for the present."

And for the time being, they let it go at that.

CHAPTER VI.

Three months later Hemenway moved out of the "ave" into the avenue. If he had not attained to one of the palaces of many baths, his apartment in the Wallington House possessed at least one joyously elaborate bathroom, with a plate-glass shower, milky tiles, and shining silver fittings. He had a dining room with walls of royal blue, old English oak furniture whose polish was a thing of wonder, with bright Dutch curtains, a few touches of blue china, and delicate etchings in gilt-slip oaken frames. He had a day maid named Eunice, also, whose ebon features and flashing teeth fitted admirably into his color scheme.

For some weeks the sheer contrast filled his existence with content. To sit at his window in the Wallington and read, glancing out from time to time at the peaceful beauty of the avenue, was a source of almost inexhaustible happiness. To watch his new neighbors come and go—pleasant people in seemly attire, keen, successful men, sweet, guarded women, sedate and soft-voiced children—thrilled him with a continual joy as of home-coming. He was back among his own people at last.

Not that he wasted time in idleness, however. He dressed, indeed, in spa-

cious leisure and breakfasted like sultan, but it was in preparation for a day of almost frenzied activity. There was, as the general manager had said, a lot to be done. The Hayes-Bennett Corporation, which employed him, operated a chain of street railways in the smaller cities of the East and South; cities whose governments, conceivably to save themselves the trouble of governing, had handed over the citizens *en bloc* to the exploitation of the transit company. Enjoying strictly monopolistic franchises and appearing only in the persons of subordinate officials, the corporation was left in the pleasant position of having nothing very pressing to worry about—except to charge as much as possible for as meager a service as the citizens aforesaid—always miraculously docile—would accept without open riot. Hence dry rot overhead, out-of-date methods below, inefficiency that went unrebuked; while administrative heads, waxing stout with ease, played golf in the afternoons with the same admirable regularity with which they drew their salaries.

As chief of the supplies department, Hemenway found waste, overlapping, and slackness at every turn. He strongly suspected that there had been graft, also. With all the enthusiasm of youth and his newborn spirit of service, he set himself to pull his department into shape, sparing neither himself nor his subordinates.

He braced himself for months of arduous toil, plunging into his problems with a sort of joyous exaltation. In his new position, he had been elevated to the dignity of a private office with a knee-hole desk in the center of an island of blue carpet; and there he would labor all day, snatching only the time required to run up to Broadway and exchange a word with Susie over a Sunshine lunch table.

He found that a glimpse of her at

Monday cleared his mind of confusion and fatigue, sending him back to the grind with renewed energy.

At night, dulled and tired, he would await her at the subway entrance, and together they would walk for an hour on Riverside Drive, or linger in the quiet of some obscure restaurant or uptown motion-picture theater. The latter was a form of entertainment that mildly irritated Hemenway; but as it raised Susie to some mysterious heaven of delightful romance, he found a sufficient pleasure in sitting at her side in the shimmering darkness and silence of the picture-play house. Always at last he would take Susie home and return with soothed brain and steady nerves to refreshing sleep.

The general manager expressed pleasure at his work toward the end of the month.

"Go ahead, my boy," he said. "Whack her up some more."

And he lit a cigar and phoned for his car to carry him off to the golf course.

Hemenway continued to whack her up, much encouraged. It seemed to him, in these days of fierce activity and evenings of sweet content, that life was, after all, a very simple and straightforward proposition. You had to find your job and do it with all your might, and leave a just and generous social organization to take care of the rest. Reduced to these terms, life indeed appeared to be of a beautiful simplicity. He was to discover shortly that those are precisely the terms to which life, as it is lived in an age of competitive industrialism, can never be reduced.

The first hint of unsuspected complication came from Gordon Lefreyne, a wealthy copper manufacturer with whom Hemenway did considerable business. On one of his calls, Lefreyne sent in, by an oversight, a private visiting card. Hemenway saw with interest that Lefreyne's town address was in the Wallington House. He was a small,

stout man, with white hair and a multiple chin, and his most notable characteristic was an incurable boyish exuberance of manner. He spun his hat in the air, as he entered, and caught it deftly; strutted about the blue carpet, instead of taking a chair; and appeared ready to invite Hemenway, on the slightest provocation, to a game of leapfrog around his office.

"Do you know you're a neighbor of mine?" remarked Hemenway. "I've been living at the Wallington for some time."

"Never guessed it," said Lefreyne. "Where do you hide yourself? We're mostly around there, evenings."

Hemenway wondered secretly what the effect would be on Lefreyne if he told the truth—that he spent his evenings in the society of a quick-lunch waitress whose ideals in entertainment were reached by motion pictures.

"Oh, I loaf or read or go to a show," he said. "I don't know many people, you see, and I get very little spare time, anyway."

"Rot!" cried Lefreyne. "All work and no play— You know the rest. You must mix around and get acquainted. Live young bachelor— mustn't be a recluse! We've got a delightful mob at the Wallington. You'll like them all."

They spoke about the avenue, and the pleasant serenity of its life, and finally Lefreyne invited him to lunch. Hemenway found it impossible to refuse; for how was he to explain to Lefreyne that he had a waitress sweetheart, at a place Lefreyne would not dream of entering? He went, and for the first time in months Susie looked for him in vain.

"How do you find your job over there, Hem?" inquired Lefreyne, as they became confidential over the coffee cups.

Hemenway replied with enthusiasm. He sketched out his program of modernization.

"That's all right—excellent! Enthusiastic youngster—like to feel the wind in your face, what? But mustn't go too fast, you know! Might make you unpopular. How do you hit it off with Corrigan?"

Corrigan was the general superintendent, a man in the early forties.

"It's a curious thing," said Hemenway, "but almost everybody I meet asks me that. Why on earth shouldn't I get along with Corrigan?"

"Don't like the fellow," replied Lefreyne shortly. "Something mean about him. Five or six men I've known at your headquarters, all bright young fellows—on the boost—well, they boosted themselves just so high and then they quit. Some went up, some went down. Some are holding good jobs elsewhere; some I've lost track of ever since. Important point is they all quit."

"Where's the connection?"

"Corrigan! They got up against Corrigan, and they quit."

Hemenway laughed incredulously.

"Oh, there's no harm in old Corrigan. He's a bit of a roughneck, and I can't say that I'd care to make a friend of him. But he's a very keen administrator."

"Too damned keen!" observed Lefreyne with a shrug; and he changed the subject, as a couple of his friends joined them.

As fate ordered it, Hemenway had not long to wait before Corrigan gave him a more definite understanding of his quality. The incident arose out of an improved device for welding and trimming steel rails, which Hemenway had joyfully discovered on its first introduction to the market, and which he sought to introduce at once by a letter to the works manager.

Harris, the works manager, was a meager, unfriendly man, with long hair and shifty black eyes. Apparently he lost not a moment in acquainting Corrigan with the innovation.

Hemenway arrived at his office the next day to find Corrigan already connected on his desk phone.

"That you, Hemenway?" said the sharp, staccato accents of the superintendent. "Well, I want to tell you right here that all instructions to the works department go through my office."

"I sent them no instructions," replied Hemenway. "It was a memorandum for their information, that's all."

"That double-control stuff don't go! It'll make a hash of the routine in the works. We've had this all thrashed out before you came, with a tangle of cross orders and lost records that took weeks to straighten out. We can't have it all over again. Do you get me?"

"I'll come across and see you," said Hemenway, slamming down the instrument.

He went across the office to Corrigan's room. The superintendent was a big man, with a very long body and extremely short, thick limbs, which gave him a curious effect of standing perpetually on his hind legs. He had a bulging brow and a heavily undershot chin, and was quite openly without manners or good breeding. But if he was an unashamed roughneck, he had the air of being at least a genial roughneck.

"You see, Hemenway," he explained, "we can't have the works muddled by lack of coördination in the office. Harris doesn't know where he is on this thing."

"It seems simple enough to me," objected Hemenway. "He doesn't need to have instructions to weld rails. All he's asked to do is try this Weiss machine out before we order some."

"We're knocking along all right with the methods we've got. Harris says it'd take six weeks to get the gangs accustomed to the process, and there's sixty more miles of track to cover this year. Better leave it alone a bit. I'm

not going to ask Harris to crowd the men any more at present."

Hemenway reflected that Corrigan had been with the firm more years than he himself had served months, and was likely to know what he was talking about.

"If you think so," he said. "But it's quite plain to me, you know, that this Weiss method will do a better job in half the time. Till we get it, we're losing money, and the crossing layouts are banging the bogies to pieces and irritating the public all over the country."

"Who in blazes cares about the public?" snapped Corrigan, suddenly thrusting out his large face and tapping on his desk with the handle of a rubber stamp. "Look at here, Hemenway! You keep off my ground and I'll keep off yours!"

"I'd no intention of encroaching," responded Hemenway, a little disgusted at Corrigan's persistent reduction of the affair to a personal basis, in which the interests of the firm and of the company's passengers had no part. He had no desire to argue the matter on this plane, and proceeded to drop it until he could obtain authority from higher up.

To his utter astonishment, he received from the general manager, only a week later, a letter of instructions concerning the new process.

"Mr. Corrigan," it said, "has drawn my attention to a new welder introduced by the Weiss people, and recommends its immediate adoption. He will be able to furnish you with any necessary particulars. Arrange to see the Weiss representative and get terms on a trial installation."

The brutal shamelessness of the thing left Hemenway dumb with amazement. He knew that Corrigan, not being an engineer—he was, in fact, as ignorant as the beasts that perish of mechanical matters—would never have

heard of the process in twenty years had not he, Hemenway, attempted to put it on trial. Indeed, Hemenway had been inclined to plume himself on the exact knowledge of recent technical developments by which he had been enabled to detect its advantages.

He stared angrily at the letter for some minutes, alternately pale and red with rage and disgust. Finally his explosive temper carried him off his balance, and he jumped from his chair and strode across the building to Corrigan's office. Entering, he closed the door behind him, laid the letter on the table, and tapped it significantly.

"Well, what's the matter with it?" snapped Corrigan. His protuberant brow seemed to meet his projecting chin in a sudden diabolical scowl.

"You're not playing square, that's all," said Hemenway hotly. "You know I found the thing, or you'd never have heard of it. Now you've worked the cold deck on me and hogged the credit for yourself. It's too raw, Corrigan!"

"I don't understand you at all. If the thing's good, we ought to have it. What does it matter who found it?"

"It matters to this extent, that if there's any more such funny business, I take back what I said about keeping off your ground. Pull it again and we fight. Get me?"

Corrigan rose on his hind legs, his heavy brows knotted ferociously, his face black with sudden fury.

"Get to hell out of here!" he snarled, pointing to the door. "And don't start anything you can't finish! If it's trouble you're hunting, you can have all you want!"

"Very well," replied Hemenway, in a cold temper. "Now at least we understand each other."

He returned to his room with a conviction of having entered irrevocably upon a fight to the knock-out.



She might have been accounted too big in a tailor costume, but in bathing dress she was superb.

CHAPTER VII.

It was a hard and grueling, though silent, fight, which endured the whole of the winter. During this period, though he had finished the reorganization of his department, Hemenway worked harder than ever. All thought of marriage was swept out of his mind.

During those months, he could scarcely be said to have lived in any real sense of the word. He had no personal existence apart from his job. He was transformed into a mere grinding human mechanism for the defeat of Corrigan. In this gigantic effort, he had no thought of personal gain; indeed, he was too young, and insuffi-

ciently greedy, to set much value on money apart from the immediate need of it.

But in the struggle with Corrigan, some deep instinct of private honor and self-respect was involved, making the work of Hemenway's department appear, for the time, to be the sole reason for his presence on the earth.

At first Hemenway was inclined to regard the superintendent as one of those narrow creatures, to be found in most large offices, who exalt their firm to the sacred pedestal of a faith. He had not only made the Hayes-Bennett Corporation his career; he had made it his hope of salvation. Still more

definitely had he constituted himself its high priest. There was but one firm, and he, Corrigan, was its prophet. He labored for it and exhorted for it with the loud self-mortification of a religious devotee. He made its business, its personnel, and the politics of its office, his sole and absorbing interest in life.

The essential motive behind his interminable maneuvers soon disclosed itself, however, as the aggrandizement of Corrigan. When the interest of the firm, or of the public it served, clashed with this end, those interests had to suffer. It was not, of course, the first time that a high priest had adopted his religion for the sake of the profit there was in it. But Hemenway began to look upon Corrigan not only with personal dislike, but with a strong moral disapproval.

Corrigan was the supercriminal, an antisocial being, the enemy of Hemenway's religion of faithful, self-sacrificing service. He was an infidel. And when men hold different religions, they cannot argue to a compromise; they can only fight.

They fought. Day and night Hemenway worked, checking every detail of his department's operation; personally ascertaining that the smallest transaction that might give Corrigan a loophole was above suspicion; striving to anticipate every move by which the enemy could spring a surprise upon him.

That Corrigan was not idle, he had ocular and aural evidence from time to time. There was the day, for instance, when he encountered the superintendent entertaining at dinner not only the fox-faced works manager, but also a subordinate of Hemenway's. In every department there were men with whom Corrigan maintained close personal relations. From time to time, as details of the superintendent's career reached him, Hemenway stood appalled at the diabolical cleverness with which

Corrigan attacked and absorbed the departments not already under his control.

As an example of dynamic efficiency, he was splendid. As an opponent, he was too blatantly unscrupulous not to be regarded with apprehension.

That this apprehension was not confined to Corrigan's equals in rank, Hemenway discovered one day on his way to lunch. As he dashed toward Broadway, there emerged from a saloon wicket gate into his path a pale, emaciated figure with frayed attire and mended shoes. In the strained features, filled with an embittered resignation, he had some difficulty in recognizing his predecessor in the department of supplies. A few short months back the man had handed over his keys to Hemenway and departed from the office cheerfully, well groomed and apparently prosperous, to seek employment elsewhere.

"Why, it's Kenyon!" exclaimed Hemenway, stopping short in surprise at his former colleague's battered and unkempt appearance. "What on earth have you been doing to yourself?"

The fellow's face worked weakly.

"You better ask me what Corrigan did to me," he said.

Hemenway led him back into the saloon and bought him a drink, and Kenyon attacked the free-lunch counter with voracity. Returning with a sandwich clutched in a trembling hand, he broke out into high-pitched curses against Corrigan.

"That damned devil!" he said, with the quaint phrasing of the man who has begun to use bad language late in life under the stress of violent emotion. "He murdered me, Hem! Nine of my best years I put in at that office—all gone, all wasted! It didn't suit that damned devil to see anybody boosted. He went after me, and when I wasn't looking, he got me. Broke me up and fired me out—broke me up so cruel that

I was glad to be fired. Now—— Well, you got eyes of your own."

He clenched his fists and shook them at the mirror across the bar, breaking anew into blasphemy on the subject of Corrigan and his works.

"I'd got a home together and was going to get married," he complained. "Now it's all gone. Well, maybe I don't need it. She's better off without me, like I am now."

He sank into his original state of exhausted resignation, drinking hungrily out of his glass. It seemed to be an habitual state from which only Hemenway's appearance had succeeded in arousing him. As for Hemenway, his ire rose at the man's cowardice, as he considered it. He was not yet old enough in the business world of New York to diagnose that new, but terribly real and deadly, disease that may be described as *psychosis commercialis*, or business man's collapse.

"You must brace up," he urged. "When you fight, you've got to be ready to take a beating, man! Take a fresh hold while you've time. There's plenty of work in the world."

"Lots of jobs at twenty dollars," replied Kenyon, more calmly. "I've got one—selling bum rebuilt typewriters. You wait till that devil gets you. He will get you, you know! He gets everybody, in the end. He's got all the cards, and he rings in a cold deck when he feels he can use it. You're fighting him, like the rest of Lishman's suckers. I can see your finish, if you can't."

"Well, I'd try to take it smiling," responded Hemenway breezily. "But I don't think I'm a sucker for Lishman or anybody else."

Kenyon leaned over in tremulous confidence.

"Yes, you are! Lishman's afraid of Corrigan, see? He thinks Corrigan's after the general managership, and he's right. So he brings in a lot of young suckers and pitchforks them into posi-

tions where they'll get into Corrigan way and give him trouble. That keeps him from going after Lishman—but not for long! He'll get Lishman in the end. It's easy enough to talk. But wait till Corrigan knocks you out and see what line of brace-up bunk you'll hand us then!"

"Well, he can't kill me," smiled Hemenway.

"A man that's lost ambition is worse than dead," rejoined the other sourly.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was inevitable that Hemenway should see less and less of Susie Trainor as time went on. It was certainly not through any desire to see less of her, for he continued to pass every hour of his spare time in her company; it was simply that his work, and the new associations growing out of it, gravely limited his spare time. Gradually, but surely, Susie was relegated to a tiny corner compartment of his existence.

It was essentially also a water-tight compartment, if the phrase is permitted. Hemenway had not realized this at first, but after his introduction to the Lefreyne household, the fact was forcibly impressed upon him.

On that evening he dressed for dinner for the first time since his mother's last birthday on earth, in the old colonial home down South. It marked a definite stage in his return to civilized life.

Lefreyne was a host of inexhaustible good spirits, an easy money maker who frankly enjoyed life; and his wife was a dapper and engaging hostess of equally inexhaustible tact, who had long been accustomed to the entertainment of young people. There was a pretty daughter of about fifteen, with copper-colored hair still in two heavy ropes and dimpled, promising elbows displayed in a short-sleeved frock. She

sat next her father at the foot of the table, and joined in the conversation with a delicious air of being definitely grown up. She felt eminently capable of supervising her mother in the performance of social duties, and did so.

There was Denis Lefreyne, a man of about Hemenway's age, who dressed like a fashion plate and talked like a guide to Broadway. He was an intensely sophisticated young fellow, as became one employed in a smart broker's office, and if there was anything he did not know, the fact had not yet been brought to his attention.

The conversation under the domed lamp was extremely unlike the fine old crusted social tone of Carolina. But if the gathering lacked the suavity and repose of Charleston society, it had a verve and a brilliance that more than compensated.

Hemenway was among his own people at last. Their standards were his own; to them he might fearlessly use the whole of his vocabulary. The pleasure of real conversation, of talk that sparkled and flashed in merry, effortless continuity, exhilarated him like wine. He was a distinct success, in consequence, and Mrs. Lefreyne commanded him no longer to hide himself in his den. Lefreyne took him by the arm after dinner and walked him about the library in a chummy, confidential way all his own.

Once his host stopped short in front of a framed photograph that stood upon his writing desk.

"What an adorable head!" exclaimed Hemenway involuntarily.

It was, indeed, a lovely portrait, by Reutlinger, of Paris—a delicate, spiritual face of perfect oval outline, with dancing eyes and a mutinous mouth. The head was thrown back on the slender neck as if in happy ecstasy.

"She looks like a fairy," said Hemenway, after a moment's admiring study. "Like a fairy who has lived long

enough among mortals to enjoy maron sundaes."

"Ah, that's the one you haven't seen yet," explained Lefreyne, swelling with pride. "Alice—my eldest daughter. She's finishing in Europe, but she'll be home in the spring. Wonderful girl, though I say it! Quite a singer, too. French, Italian— You shall meet her."

"If she's half as wonderful as the photograph—" began Hemenway, much impressed.

"Pshaw! A pale reflection, dear boy—a pale reflection," laughed Lefreyne, in amiable paternal vanity.

Hemenway became a regular visitor at the Lefreyne home. This, super-added to his late evenings at the office and the weekly evenings that Susie insisted on reserving for the purpose of visiting her baby daughter out in a Long Island suburb, considerably curtailed their opportunities for meeting. The Sunshine management further complicated the matter by changing her hours of duty.

On a Saturday afternoon, the day of this alteration, Hemenway was astonished to encounter her walking in the avenue at an hour when he confidently believed her to be at work. He was accompanied by young Denis Lefreyne, whom he introduced. Susie held out a frank and friendly hand when Denis bowed to her. It appeared that she had some urgent shopping to execute, and they parted after a few casual phrases.

"What a queen!" ejaculated young Lefreyne, glancing back at the girl as she passed on up the avenue. "It's a mystery where these working girls get their looks, isn't it? I never saw eyes such a wonderful blue. And what a walker! She moves like a goddess."

"How did you guess that she was a working girl?" asked Hemenway, vaguely uncomfortable.

"Oh, I don't know. Didn't you see

her shake hands when you introduced me? How does one tell about people?"

He stole a knowing glance at Hemenway.

"You can't fool me, you know—really, old man! But I shan't try to steal her. You're a lucky devil, at that. I'd give a lot to have her look at me the way she looked at you."

Hemenway hastened to drop the subject. But from that moment he was troubled by definite doubts of his exact position with regard to Susie Trainor. He began to suspect that she had been right in insisting that he should wait and be sure. Fate seemed inexorably to force upon him the choice between Susie and a career. He foresaw that the two would become increasingly incompatible. He imagined her, for instance, inquiring at the Lefreyne dinner table whether Bernard Shaw was not a "sorta comedian." The thought was not reassuring.

He told himself frequently that an honorable man would have broken with her long ago. But this he knew to be impossible; he had grown to depend upon her too intimately. Since that day in the Atlantic breakers, their natures had put forth twining, interlocking tendrils of sentiment about each other that could not be torn away without agonizing pain.

So Susie continued to visit him on his evenings at home, still walked with him by night on Riverside Drive or the avenue. They no longer, however, referred to the subject of marriage, as if by tacit consent; and if occasionally they discussed a rosy future, it was in terms of the swelling career of Hemenway in business, and its joys were the victories of his triumphant personality.

But on the days when things at the great office downtown went awry, when the struggle left him tired and discouraged, when the solitude of his apartment was intolerable, and the Le-

freyne's set insufficiently soothing, he would rush to the Sunshine to pick up Susie, as of old. He would bear her off to a motion-picture theater, and afterward to the Wallington House.

There he would lounge at the foot of a morris chair, his head on her big, softly rounded knee, her firm white fingers playing among his black curls. And he would draw from her glorious vitality, from her gently hovering spirit of perfected womanhood, a solace ineffable for the wounds of his soul—a magical restoration of vigor for the tasks of the morrow.

In this way the winter passed and the spring came. And appropriately with the spring, there set sail from Europe, accompanied by many very large trunks and one very small French maid, the fairylike figure of Alice Lefreyne.

She set sail joyously and eagerly, and to wreck a man's career and break a woman's heart was as far from her intentions as it was from her thoughts—infinately far. Alice Lefreyne was coming home to have a gorgeous good time, and to help everybody else to have one.

Life is arranged that way.

By this time Hemenway had become intimately associated with the younger set whose orbit included the Lefreyne household. In face of his alluring social opportunities, he had reached a point at which he began to resent the grip of the machine. To a man of twenty-five, a life that is divided between an office desk and a bedroom is likely after a time to present an aspect of absurdity. He felt that the daily routine was crippling his mind, thwarting every natural instinct, cruelly limiting any sort of self-development.

When the winter passed, also, he had not only succeeded in preventing Corrigan from catching him tripping in the smallest detail, but had defeated on two occasions that energetic foe's attempts

to force nominees of his own into vacancies in the supplies department.

Finally, Hemenway was even given control of an additional department, which the general manager took for the purpose out of Corrigan's hands.

"You've done very well," said Lishman, purring in his cozily padded swivel chair. "Keep it up, you know. You can go as far as you like."

"That work was under Mr. Corrigan's control," objected Hemenway. "He'll raise Cain about it when he knows."

"If I tell Corrigan that he must turn it over to you," responded Lishman, his jaw hardening as he ceased to purr, "I guess he's got to turn it over, without any superfluous comment. You can go ahead. I'll put it in black and white for Corrigan before I go to golf."

Hemenway returned to his room with a feeling of relief comparable to the snapping of some prolonged intolerable strain.

"I guess that's got old Corrigan hog-tied, all right," he thought. "It'll be plainer sailing from now on."

To his surprise, Corrigan appeared to arrive at the same conclusion. His manner became markedly propitiatory. Hemenway, too young and generous to bear malice, met the superintendent's advances halfway. It appeared that on both sides the hatchet had been definitely buried.

"And now," said Hemenway to himself, "now at last I can begin to live."

And he began to reach out increasingly after the things he felt to be necessary to existence, which he had painfully denied himself in favor of the office—friends, books, music, theaters, healthful games, all the pleasantly varied interests of life as it is lived in West End Avenue.

He joined the Lefreyne's country club, and became a regular member of their automobile parties. He bought a tennis outfit and a set of golf clubs,

and ordered evening clothes of a less archaic cut than his Charleston tailor's version.

It was a source of bitterness and heart searching to him that he might not take Susie with him into his new sphere. He resented almost daily, at first, the necessity of keeping the girl in her isolated compartment, of making his love a thing apart from his life. But if at the outset he somewhat guiltily stole time from her to devote to his new friends, it was not long before he reached a stage at which he conceived himself to be stealing time from his new friends to devote to her.

Inevitably the idea of marrying her receded into the region of regretted impossibilities. He felt that it would be a wanton and perhaps cruel disfigurement of her life as well as his own; an attempt, foredoomed to failure, to reconcile the irreconcilable.

CHAPTER IX.

For some time he felt this without permitting himself to think it. On the evening of Alice Lefreyne's return to New York, it crystallized itself in the terms of a self-evident truth.

Entering the Lefreyne apartment one evening after dinner, Hemenway was led into the library to find her holding an intimate reception on her return from Europe. Delicately small and vividly dark, with chestnut hair and eyes of so deep a hazel that at night they seemed to be quite black, Alice Lefreyne's beauty was a perfectly satisfactory thing. She was standing in the light of a standard lamp considerably taller than herself, and at the first glimpse of her, he halted involuntarily.

She also, on her part, seemed to stop short in the middle of a flood of musical chatter to gaze at the tall young engineer, with his keen, sensitive features and eloquent eyes. For a long moment they gazed, and a kind of

greeting seemed to pass between them before Hemenway was presented. It was as if they recognized each other at sight as kindred souls.

Most of the evening he shared a sofa with Alice, frankly fascinated; and she, a small and dashing pirate of hearts, was quick to observe her power and to delight in its exercise.

She was gowned in an exquisite silken tissue of a new shade of pale blue, the evident spoil of the Place Vendôme. Her coiffure was six months in advance of New York styles. Every hair of her delicate brows and lashes might have been placed there separately by an artist. Her small nose was cunningly modeled; her distracting mouth like crushed rose leaves.

Hemenway did not so much fall in love with her as become her hypnotic subject. In her vivacity, her frailness, her *espièglerie*, she was like a lovely child. In manner she was an exquisite flower of high culture. Her laugh was a silver ripple of ecstasy, her every pose and movement instinct with conscious and cultivated charm.

He returned late to his apartment, definitely under her spell.

"That's the sort of girl I should marry," he told himself, with a sense of awaited revelation.

"I believe I could have her, too," he reflected, recalling her instant interest in himself.

"And by Heaven," he said at last, bringing his fist down sharply on the arm of his chair, "that's the girl I'm going to marry!"

He was under no misapprehension as to the magnitude of the undertaking. Matrimonially considered, he was a poor man, with only hazy prospects of achieving real independence. But there was no hurry. In youth there is always time, and with time all things are possible.

Susie Trainor, of course, instantly presented herself in the light of a press-

ing and painful problem. He blamed himself bitterly for having failed to recognize and face it earlier. Indeed, he spent a succession of sleepless nights of keen self-reproach in this regard. But he awoke each morning with a vision of Alice Lefreyne's face of the sundae-eating fairy; and finally he realized that it would be necessary to use his brains to arrive at a decision, lest his heart should be torn in twain in the process.

He dealt with the problem in what he sincerely believed to be the kindest as well as the most honorable manner.

He called for Susie at the Sunshine Restaurant, or, more precisely, he waited for her outside it—for it was now so long since he had entered the place that the Jack Hemenway who used to hasten there on impatient feet seemed an entirely different individual. They walked together up Riverside Drive, and rested on a bench set in a recess of the primeval rock that bears Manhattan upon its surface like a pinch of impalpable dust. There, beneath the whispering trees, they strove to consider the position seriously.

"You see, Sue," he said, "I'm in for a long, hard fight, and there's no knowing where I'll finish. Once you climb above the ruck, you've got to keep on climbing or drop out. It'll be years, perhaps, before I'm in a position to marry safely. Meanwhile, everything seems to conspire to separate us. I'm eternally shelving something or somebody to see you, or shelving you—Heaven forgive me!—to see somebody or do something in my own set. It amounts to this—that you're giving me the best years of your life, while I keep on taking and taking and give nothing—perhaps haven't anything to give. We've got to face the situation squarely and use intelligence on it."

The light of the gas lamp with which a thoughtful municipality had carefully illuminated the alcove in the rocks

shone, upon Susie's richly gilded hair and strong, honest face. She did not move a muscle of it. She merely looked him frankly and bravely in the eyes.

"I'm not asking you to marry me, Jack," she said. "It would be—hard not to see you any more."

"But don't you see that—for us two—there's no middle way? I can't play any double hand with you, Sue. You've been altogether too dear and splendid for that. I've got to choose between my world and yours before I do you any irreparable harm. And—it's hell, Sue—but I just can't face yours! What I suffered—down there in the 'ave'—you can't imagine! Half of me was being starved to death, and the other half tortured."

"I know—I know! Oh, I've seen it coming! I knew they would take you away from me. I didn't mind, so long as I could meet you now and then. It was something to live for. After all, you're up where you belong—and I wait in a quick-lunch joint and live on tips. Don't think I can't understand! I've got to put a front on and face it, I guess."

They sat in silence for a space, looking carefully away from each other. Susie turned suddenly and laid her hand on his knee.

"I know I'm not Miss Real Girl," she said at last. "But I can't see anything



It was as if they recognized each other at sight as kindred souls.

left in life if you go out of it. Jack, you don't have to tie the can to me till the other comes along. If there's no other woman——"

Hemenway choked.

"There is—another," he replied.

"Of course—I might have guessed."

She turned away again and sat gallantly erect, her bosom rising and falling to a single sigh.

"Well, it's no more than I've expected. I've watched it coming. I've laid awake nights and watched it coming, and dreaded it. You don't know how I've dreaded it! But now it's come, I guess I can set my back teeth together and take it quietly."

Her voice was full of submissive resignation. For a moment Hemenway, quite absurdly, was pained by her calm acceptance of the breach. He himself was riding his feeling on a cruel curb lest he should weaken. It seemed that Susie owed at least a tear to the memory of their love.

And then, quite without warning, she was on her knees at his feet, clutching at his hands, stammering, sobbing, imploring through a passion of tears.

"Jack, my Jack, you can't do it! You can't be so cruel! Think of all we've meant to each other, Jack—my own boy! You couldn't leave me forever—not forever, darling? You can't say that I'm never to see you again. I'd cut my heart out to make you happy, but— Never again! Don't let them deceive you, Jack! Don't go and make some horrible mistake. No woman can be more than a wife to you, dear. There's lots of them can be a darned sight less! Be sure—oh, be sure, boy, before you throw me away, that's yours body and soul! You've gotta be sure!"

Hemenway was appalled by the intensity of her suffering. The intelligent thought he had devoted to the question of their future suddenly appeared to have no relation to it at all. He raised her to her feet and took her in his arms and kissed her wet face repeatedly, assuring her that he would never love anybody else, swearing by all the gods that he would never leave her. Presently the tremors of her splendid figure grew less violent; her shoulders ceased to heave. She drew away from him, strangling her sobs, standing at last calmly erect in the light of the lamp.

When she spoke, her tone was completely changed.

"Listen, Jack, I was mad to pull that stuff on you," she said, in a quiet, controlled voice. "I must have turned yellow a yard wide. It isn't like me. I never cried since—since Lant died, and

I didn't think I could cry any more. I know quite well you're right. I've known it all along."

He took a step toward her, as in protest, but she held him off with a ready hand.

"No, let me tell you. I can't stand in your way. You've got a career coming to you, and success and riches, and I'm a fool to think no woman could make you happy but me. And I've seen how it hurt you when I spoke of Lant or the kiddy. Of course, the world's full of better women than me, and you can pick and choose when you get ready. Don't think the blame's on you! It isn't. I knew I was doing wrong from the first, when I went after you and marked you for mine. And you were all mine, once. I can't beg—I oughtn't to expect any more. I can be grateful for that. After all, I've had one life and one chance at happiness. I don't want to grab off another at your expense."

A belated green auto bus bore down on them with a horrid snarling of gears.

"Sit down," said Hemenway, and sank bewildered on the bench.

"No, it's good-by," said Susie. "It'll be hard for you, too. But we've got to face it now or never. And, oh, my dear boy, I do want you to be happy!"

She turned away and signaled the auto bus with her umbrella. It stopped beside her with a squealing of brakes.

"Susie!" called Hemenway, dashing after her in sudden panic.

But already she was on the step of the bus, there was the sound of the conductor's impatient bell, and the motor raced hideously in the quiet Drive. While he still hesitated, on the point of springing after her, the great machine pulled into its stride, and she was no more than a dark blur on its receding roof.

For several days thereafter, Hemenway suffered torments of remorse. But gradually the fascination of Alice

Lefreyne made it impossible for him to seek out Susie with an undivided heart; and he found himself definitely enrolled in the numerous company of suitors that the return of Alice had attracted to the Wallington House apartment.

CHAPTER X.

The courtship of Alice Lefreyne resolved itself naturally into three periods. There was the period of hot and eager competition; there followed the period of almost possession, which might be designated the automobile period; and last came the period of shattering surprise.

Competition was not due to any lack of encouragement on the part of Alice, for the brilliant little creature exhibited from the first a marked preference for the society of the handsome young engineer, with his suave Southern manners and chivalrous tenderness. But Alice was extremely popular. She existed in a perpetual crowd, she inhabited an endless stirring *va-et-vient* that was, indeed, her natural atmosphere, and in which she flitted as appropriately as a bright butterfly in sunshine or a gold-fish in a fountain.

Alice was also expensive. Hemenway soon realized that his income, swollen as it had been beyond his wildest expectations, would scarcely suffice to support more than the week-ends of her costly little existence.

He found himself launched upon an interminable round of routs and revels, of cabaret parties and golf excursions. Not infrequently he reached his desk in the morning lax and stale, yawning and wishing the day were over.

There was, however, no other way. A man who wanted Alice Lefreyne must live her life until he could induce her to live his. With a regretful eye upon his stationary bank balance, he set himself to stand the pace.

And at the end of three months he had won.

It happened on the roof of the Wallington on a baking night in June. It was one of the many sharp contrasts between the avenue and the "ave" that this roof, instead of being given over to coal grits, hideous chimney stacks, and clotheslines, was laid out in pretty shrubbery, with flower beds and tiled walks and a pergola.

Hemenway had driven Alice home in the early morning from a charity fête at which she had sung her captivating contralto ballads. The heat in the entrance hall had been like a blow in the face, and it had occurred to him that it would be a finely unconventional young idea to witness the sunrise from the roof.

Somewhat to his surprise, Alice consented with alacrity. They scandalized the sleepy elevator boy by insisting on making the ascent. In three months it was almost the first opportunity Hemenway had found to arrive at an understanding with the girl; and though his heart beat madly at the prospect, he could not let it pass.

On the roof, far above the ovenlike streets, the night was almost Italian in its sweet, soft warmth, and the faint breeze that swept over from the river reminded him of the balmy airs off the South Carolina coast in the fall. Down toward the bay, colored lights glided over the water, and there floated on the night air the faint, mysterious hooting of steamboats.

"Fairy princess," said Hemenway, as they leaned on the parapet and gazed at the friendly stars, "tell me a secret."

"If you will promise to keep it," she said, moving an inch closer with a pretty effect of confidence. Their shadows merged on the moonlit parapet.

"Of course I'll keep it. Tell me, do I get any nearer?"

"Nearer to what?" he expected, but her face, upturned to his, sparkled with understanding.

"Nearer every day," she nodded.

"How near am I now?" he whispered.

Her tiny jeweled hand lay on the parapet before them. Warily the delicate fingers, with their shining filbert nails, erected themselves upon their tips and crept toward him inch by inch. In her black eye was a sidelong mischievous glance of coquetry. At last the creeping fingers approached within reach of his left hand. His right, in ambush in the shadows, trembled with suspense.

"So near," said Alice, watching his left hand.

But it was his right that shot suddenly out and closed with the inevitable quality of fate upon her tiny one, which withdrew itself too late.

"My princess!" he murmured, and raised it to his lips.

"It's a secret, remember," commanded Alice Lefreyne.

"Of course! We'll have to wait a long time, dear. I can't ask you to surrender anything—not a single one of the pleasant things you've always had. I wanted to be sure, that was all—just the hope to live on while I work."

"Then you may go ahead. I'm in no hurry. You'll find me watching at the window—my knight!"

It was just as simple as that. Hemenway had expected a vastly exciting conquest, a vividly emotional surrender. Instead, the affair took on the feeling rather of a devotional ceremony. He took her slender form in his arms reverently and fearfully, lest her delicacy should be bruised by his clasp; and the kiss he placed on her lips was one in quality with the kiss he had placed upon her hand.

She was, in truth, his princess, and he her favored courtier. For a long time they stood in the pale light that heralds the dawn, admiring each other's gracious youthful comeliness, rejoicing in each other's admiration. At last, lest

the daylight should discover them still dressed, they hurried below to their separate domains.

"And now I shall have to work like the very devil!" thought Hemenway, as he extracted the pearl studs from his shirt.

It occurred to him that of late he had allowed his work to recede to second place in his thoughts. Still, he argued, a man must retain some adequate time for his own use during his life; at the least a sufficient period to arrange his urgent personal affairs.

Now he could plunge again into the dollar scramble, a straight path before him and a glittering prize at the end. He would have to get money and yet more money, until he could to some extent measure up to the Lefreyne financial standards. Not for a moment did he doubt that he could earn more.

"I've simply got to do it," he said, in perfect faith that the means would appear. After all, did not his experience already show that a man had only to work hard? He retired to a sadly curtailed night's sleep with a firm determination to reach his office early on the morrow.

But exhausted nature laughed at his resolution. He arrived there, in point of fact, patently yawning and conspicuously late.

In the ensuing automobile period, he found it increasingly difficult to take a fresh hold of business, next to impossible to cast about him for fresh opportunities of advancement.

This period may be dated from the moment when he accompanied Alice to the Lefreyne garage, to find both the family autos already commandeered. It appeared from the evidence of Jensen, their big, blond chauffeur, that young Denis had requisitioned them without notice, for a cabaret party. Alice happened to have an important social engagement, and was late.

"Jack, you really ought to have a car

of your own," she said. "We could steal off by our two selves and nobody would know anything about it. I like to have people guessing where I am. It would be ripping if we could escape from everybody else on the spur of the moment. Don't you ever feel like that?"

Hemenway had felt like that very strongly. Indeed, he had been inclined to pick Alice up and carry her off into the wild woods on many occasions, when the perpetual crowd in which she lived had succeeded in getting on his nerves or arousing his jealousy.

"Well, why don't you get one?" asked Alice simply.

Her father bought a new car every year, so she was quite familiar with the process involved. You went to the agencies and took trial spins, and talked knowingly of gears and valves and bearings, and finally you wrote your name on a check, and the car was delivered.

"Lots of boys run autos who don't earn half your salary," she urged, and with demonstrable truth.

"Yes," assented Hemenway. "I suppose I really ought to have a car. You don't count in this town unless you run a car."

Privately computing his outlay on taxicabs and rented cars during the following week, he came to the conclusion that he might almost save money by owning a car—which was true enough, if you ignored capital outlay and garage fees. He ignored them, accordingly, and invested half his bank balance in a snappy red runabout with bucket seats.

Before long, however, he discovered that an automobile is like a silk hat. You have to live up to it all around. The driving of a red, two-seated sporting car, with a fairylike creature of expensive appearance at your side, necessarily involves a generous spaciousness of idea in other directions.

He had a growing and uncomfortable sense that he was spending too much money. But he could see no present help for it, and pushed it out of his mind with the refrain, by way of self-exhortation, that he simply had to acquire more income from somewhere, any way.

The difficulty, of course, was to begin.

He had not begun when the first shadow of doubt as to the wisdom of his course insinuated itself into his mind, robbing him of the requisite motive power. It was an insidious, tormenting doubt that he would chase away with a shrug of contempt; but it would linger in the corners of his brain like an imp of malignity, to leap out and grimace when his attention was otherwise engaged.

Starting for a road house one evening, he ran through a group of the vociferous children who made the neighborhood of the garage hideous with the ring of roller skates attached to soap-box coasters. One urchin, dodging clumsily, fell almost under his wheel. He braked sharply and got down in deep concern, followed by Alice. The infant, more scared than hurt, sat up in the roadway, dusty and draggled. He inflated his small lungs to capacity and unloosed a devastating howl.

"Come on. He's all right," said Alice impatiently. "I'm afraid of children."

It was Hemenway who lifted the infantile voice to its feet, consoled and silenced it with unheard-of riches in small change, and propelled it in the direction of safety.

At the country inn where they dined, he reverted to the subject.

"Is it true, Alice," he asked, "that you don't like children?"

She smiled one of her brilliant smiles.

"Quite! I can't even pretend to like them and fuss over them, the way some

girls do. One might as well be truthful. I simply execrate children, and hate to think that I was once a child myself. Why? I'm sure I can't tell you. At least I don't pretend, like some I know. I could ask mother to forgive me for ever having the bad taste to be six months old. And as for those children down there—grubby little animals! Ugh! Let's talk of something else."

There came finally the evening when Alice stole up to his apartment, slipping through the barely opened door into his arms with a delicious little gasp and a sparkling air of reprehensible adventure that ravished him. He had pleaded that he was too tired to go out; and as she was to leave New York on a visit to Maine the following day, she had consented to pass an evening indoors *à deux*.

She ran about the place with the restless, bright-eyed curiosity of a squirrel in a new cage; peeping into recesses, inspecting engravings, going into ecstasies over the tiny kitchen, polished by the ebon beauty, Eunice, to the gleaming perfection of a show motor. She played a little on the piano, sang an air or two in her thrilling contralto, and gazed a little out of the window. She sat upon several chairs in turn, chattering brightly; and after Hemenway had shown her how to make Turkish coffee in a tiny pannikin of beaten brass, and the coffee had been duly consumed, her resources of self-entertainment gave out definitely.

"Honey man," she said, "this is piffling. Where shall we go?"

The conclusion was startling, but inevitable, that away from matters of immediately objective interest, they could succeed, with deadly certainty, in boring each other to the verge of hysteria in something under an hour. Without music in her ears, bright and moving scenes before her eyes, new people to play with and observe and

laugh at, Alice Lefreyne could exist in comfort about as long as a goldfish out of water, as long as a butterfly in a blizzard.

For the sake of his peace of mind, Hemenway took her to the Woodmansten Inn, which happened to be the last place on earth he should have selected; for as they sought a table in a secluded corner, there passed out a stout lady in a costume of expansive richness that appeared to have been inflated. A waiter who found himself in her way she seized by the arm and pushed out of it, without the formality of a glance to ascertain whether he had been vitally injured by the corner of the table over which he had been deferentially leaning to take an order. The other people in the aisle effaced themselves without a second hint, and the stout woman breasted the throng in the entrance as a square-rigged ship before a breeze buffets the billows. Hemenway could not see her face, but he did not need a glimpse of it to recognize Susie's Aunt Mawford.

There came to him a vivid memory of their previous encounter—of the sunlit blue of Susie's eyes as she had come to meet him, her gay white hat aslant, her summery skirts bravely swinging. He reproduced, in a sort of flash back, the emotions of that day by the breakers of the Atlantic.

It was the day on which he had snatched Susie from drowning, savagely refusing aid.

It was the day on which he had called her wife.

Alice Lefreyne asked to be driven home unusually early.

CHAPTER XI.

The following day Alice departed into the country, and Hemenway positively detected himself in the sacrilegious act of sighing with relief at the thought that she would be inacces-

sible for a month. He strangled the disloyal feeling at birth; but it was the fact that he had sought her, evening after evening, in search of the rest and refreshment of spirit that he needed for his next day's work, and night after night he had left her in a state of utter exhaustion through the strain of keeping her entertained.

Her apparently frail little form thrilled with a chronic unrest; her joyous little soul ever pursued the sensations of exterior existence with unquenchable avidity.

"Here," remarked Hemenway, "is right where I get some badly needed rest."

He got it, for two evenings, with no other companions than pipe and book. On the third, he found that he had lost the habit of solitude. He felt no longer the proud proprietorship in his abode that had contented him at first. There were certain aspects of its empty familiarity that he began to detest.

And yet, he recalled, with Susie in the morris chair opposite his, the little apartment had seemed a haven of endless bliss, a sure refuge from care.

Intermittently at first, continually later, he was attacked by a gnawing hunger of mind and body—not, indeed, for Susie herself, for his mind rejected the thought, but for some magic, mysterious quality that had flowed from her in an invisible vitalizing stream.

The restless hunger grew upon him day by day, gnawing at last without cease, distracting his attention from pressing duties. At last, a little ashamed, fearfully circumspect, he wandered past the old Sunshine Restaurant one evening, in the hope of catching the merest glimpse of her.

The branch was crowded as of old, the hard electric lamps shining glacially upon its porcelain-and-marble whiteness. As of old, between the tables the linen-clad waitresses with their severe black bows moved swiftly to and

fro. He saw the Irish girl approach the wheat-cake "foundry", with the haughty step he knew, and stir the white-capped chef to the depths of his sense of humor with some laconic remark.

But Susie was not there. Doubtless, he told himself, she was still on the early-morning shift.

He turned away, bitterly disappointed. The aching void she had once filled in a moment, the pain of fatigue and boredom and longing she had been wont to soothe away with a touch of her firm white hand, returned now apace. The old sensation of incompleteness made itself felt more vividly than ever. In a week, it kept him awake; before the month was out, it had become a raging torment. He paced his room for a night, praying for Alice Lefreyne's return. On the next, finding his nerves still on edge in the small hours, he turned back at the beckoning flash of a saloon and bought a stiff, hard high ball; thereafter sleeping the unprofitable sleep of the drugged.

He repeated this dose nightly as a precaution against insomnia, and pretty soon increased it. After all, he told himself, Alice would be home in a day or two, and all would be well.

Then Alice came home, and he rushed to meet her, tremblingly anxious for the moment when they could tear themselves away from her charmed and enthusiastic friends, that he might hold her again in his arms. The opportunity presented itself the same evening in the Lefreyne library. He seized it hungrily.

And he found to his utter dismay and chagrin that she was not in the least what he needed!

In that month of her absence, the scales had fallen from his eyes. He knew now that Alice Lefreyne could not be his wife in the sense in which he imagined a wife. She was rather a

delicate orchid, to be maintained in a carefully guarded atmosphere. Moreover, though a man might possess an orchid, he knew now that no man would ever, in any real sense of the word, possess Alice Lefreyne. As well might he ask the wild flowers to bloom exclusively for him; as well expect a brilliant gem to coruscate for his eyes alone. His dainty little princess was rather a sort of diamond girl, as many-faceted, as sparkling, as a brilliant, and just about as hard, just about as cold!

They discussed their relationship seriously on the following day, over tea at the Manhattan Hotel—discussed it with knitted young brows and troubled young hearts.

"Really, I can't imagine what's wrong with us," said Alice. "But there is—something. All the flavor seems to have evaporated. You know. I'd rather like to be married. I'd like to be married to you, Jack, more than anybody I know. Of course I can't really tell—how should I? You're the handsomest boy I know, as well as the dearest, and there's something gallant and proud and fastidious about you that makes you different. I know you would cut off your right hand to save me a pain in one finger. But—there's something missing!"

Hemenway looked gratitude at her for her courage.

"I never knew anybody half so pretty or graceful or sheerly adorable,"

he said. "Any man would be proud of you! But I sometimes wonder, Alice, if you have any idea of real love—if any man ever made your heart beat faster?"

She poured out tea for him with the expression of a fairy who has stumbled upon a very human baby's rubber comforter under her favorite toadstool.

"Is it so frightfully important, I wonder?" she asked.

"It's everything. I think it's the most important thing in life. Almost the whole of life."

"I'll tell you something terrible, then. A deadly secret! You've seen Jensen, our chauffeur?"

Hemenway started, and forgot himself so far as to gape.

"Oh, I know what you'll say! But it's true, it's true! I used to cry myself to sleep because I couldn't marry him, three years ago. I have some flowers still

that he picked for me one day when the car broke down in the country. I had my hair in tails over my shoulders. His big, rough hand trembled when he offered them to me. I can't throw them away! It's tragic!"

"Lord!" whispered Hemenway, and whistled softly. "Jensen! So you're in love with Jensen!"



"It's a secret, remember," commanded Alice Lefreyne.

"I don't know! Would you call it that? He's a rough, untutored brute. But he gives me—thrills. Oh, don't think I cry for him now! A chauffeur would be too banal. But there it is—When I sit beside him in the car, I never stop trembling."

She sat there, flowerlike in her prettiness, toying with her eggshell teacup, dissecting her emotions with a cold exactitude that took Hemenway's breath away. Presently he became impelled to parallel confidences.

He told her, without excuse or concealment, the story of Susie Trainor.

"Jack! A lunch-room girl!" she exclaimed at last. "And you still want her? Isn't it extraordinary?"

"I thought it was all over when I saw you. But I've suffered a lot since. I don't seem to get her face out of my memory."

"Well, you're luckier than I," mused Alice. "I couldn't possibly marry Jensen, you know. But you——"

"I found I couldn't face it, either, Alice. I'm a coward, I guess!"

"Nonsense! What have you got to face? A man like Jensen would always be a savage, but a woman can be anything a man wants her to be, if she's young enough. In a few months she would be correcting your ideas of etiquette, Jack!"

"But education, accent, manners—It's not so easy as that. And there's the child!"

"Pshaw! Lots of men are glad to marry widows with a house full of children! Look at Mrs. Fotheringay at the Wallington. She was a widow, and not one of the children is his. As for education, Jack, I'll tell you something secret—we women don't care a straw for it! They teach us things out of books, and we put them into a mental ice box, and we can bring them out when we want to show them off. But they're quite frozen and separate—every little fact in its coating of ice!

We don't care a snap of the fingers for art or literature or science. We're too busy making ourselves charming and keeping ourselves pretty. That's the work of our lives. The other is just shine on the surface. Anybody can pick up the stuff we babble in drawing-rooms."

"I wonder," said Hemenway, and stared.

They drove home, busied with widely different speculations. In the entrance hall of the Wallington House, she gave him both her hands with a characteristically sweet and captivating gesture.

"My handsome Jack," she said, "it doesn't seem to have made so much difference to us after all—telling our secrets. Perhaps we'll both put our mistakes right some day, and be happy. In fact, there's positively no excuse for *you*, if you don't do it right away! And you and I shall be still the best pals in the world, shan't we? I haven't another friend like you, Jack!"

He raised her hands to his lips once again.

"You are always my princess," he said.

The elevator had hardly whisked her out of sight before he was back in the red runabout, sweeping out into the avenue. He knew at last that the sooner he found Susie Trainor, the sooner he would save himself from shipwreck. He knew that, without her, success would be the merest Dead Sea fruit; that, with her, even poverty and social isolation would be tolerable.

He pulled up the machine outside the familiar Sunshine branch on Broadway, and dashed through the swing doors with the effect of resuming a previous existence. His eyes eagerly scanned the lines of waitresses. Susie Trainor was not there.

He appeared before the linen-jacketed manager, briefly explanatory.

"Susan Trainor? Why, she hasn't worked here in months. She got a bit

slack in her work—sort of absent and dopy. I had to lay her off. Didn't want to do it, because she had a baby or something to keep. But she broke down badly one day in the rush hour. Dropped some plates and cried, and I couldn't do anything with her. Of course, this firm's not a charitable institution."

"You don't know where she went?"

"She may have started at one of the other branches, for anything I know. She just put on her hat and went home."

Hemenway broke all the traffic regulations to slivers on the way up to West End Avenue. In the "ave" he encountered the woman from whom Susie had rented her room. She was devouring pretzels out of a paper bag.

"Sue, she ain't here no more," the landlady said, discarding the empty bag and wiping her hands in her apron. "She move out long dime back. Ain't left no address, neider."

She masticated the final pretzel, starting. Hemenway swung round on his tracks, tore back to the Sunshine Restaurant, and intercepted the Irish girl of the haughty carriage as she went off duty.

"Search me about Sue," said the haughty one. "I hope she horned into a job some place, because she wasn't engaged to no fella, and far's I know she's got no folks. Maybe she got started at some other lunch joint. It's a bum prospect if she didn't."

She spoke a little inimically, edging away by degrees.

"By Heaven," swore Hemenway, throwing in his clutch, "I'll find her if it takes the rest of my life!"

And he meant it. He was fiercely in earnest. He devoted several days to a tour of every likely place in New York and innumerable unlikely ones. He was on the point of opening a wider campaign, involving the use of detectives, when the fact that he was too

late was brought home to him with sickening force.

It was on the day that he proposed to consult a detective agency that Corrigan sprang his mine, and Hemenway's world blew up and crumbled beneath his feet.

CHAPTER XII.

It was the simplest and crudest device imaginable, this petard of Corrigan's; but the accuracy with which it was directed against Hemenway's weakest points demonstrated sharply the brutal ability of Corrigan, as well as his unrelenting intensity of purpose.

It had been recognized for some time that the Hayes-Bennett Corporation would have to put up a fight for the renewal of its franchises in two of the smaller cities in its field of operations. In order to forestall competition, the directors had even considered the complete modernization of the service, including the establishment of new power plants.

By indefatigable watchfulness, by interminable pulling of his concealed wires throughout the office, Corrigan had contrived that Hemenway should remain in ignorance of this. Accordingly, his interests being temporarily diverted to the arrangement of his personal life, Hemenway made out specifications in happy ignorance of the sweeping alterations in system that were proposed, and went out to meet Alice and take her to tea. And the manager came back from golf, a little fatigued, and signed the contracts based on the specifications without looking at them.

At length came the inevitable upheaval. It took place in the manager's room one heated afternoon of the Indian summer. Hemenway entered cheerily, to find Lishman, no longer cozy, scowling over some docketed papers. Corrigan stood at his elbow, his bulging forehead bedewed with per-

spiration not entirely due to the temperature.

Lishman looked up with darkling brows.

"How's this, Hemenway?" he demanded, tapping a letter. "Here's the Falb Electric Company trying to deliver supplies to Altonville and Lake Seminole on the old contracts!"

"The contracts were renewed. You signed them three months ago."

"But not on these specifications, damn it!" snapped Lishman. "Surely you know this stuff's no use when we've about decided to scrap the polyphase current?"

Hemenway's heart stood still, then leaped and pounded in his ears.

"It's the first word I've heard about it," he said.

Bewildered, he glanced at Corrigan. The corrugated face of the superintendent worked slightly as he swallowed; the undershot lips were tightly compressed, the heavy cheek muscles tautly drawn. But behind the averted horn-rimmed spectacles there was a gleam in Corrigan's eye of a triumph too rich and luscious to be entirely concealed.

In a flash Hemenway knew that the man had got him. He saw in their order each of the swift and inevitable stages of his undoing.

"But it's incredible that you shouldn't know!" said Lishman, angrily striking the papers on the desk with his fist. "That's what you're there for! There isn't a clerk who doesn't know that some change was proposed. The office cat knows."

"I heard of a proposal for new alternators—nothing of any change in the system."

"Then it's shocking bad coördination between departments, or it's just pure sleepwalking! Here we are with our hands tied, and the Falb people unloading on us trainloads of priceless stuff that won't be worth junk prices

when we get it. What in hell are you going to do about that? I expected better things of you, Hemenway."

Hemenway was silent. There was simply nothing to be said. He might blame the cheerfully casual methods of Lishman, or the deliberately misleading policy of Corrigan, or the strange silence of a dozen small subordinates who might have warned him. But he was not that kind. He knew that, in the final event, the blame lay upon his detachment from the general life of the office during the past summer.

"Well, we simply can't accept delivery," growled Lishman. "You've got us into the hole, and now it's up to you to get us out of it, the best way you can find. I'll see you about it later."

"I'm afraid the problem is rather an embarrassing one to put up to Mr. Hemenway," suavely and sympathetically put in Corrigan. "If I might suggest, it could be handled more appropriately by my department."

"Why so?" demanded Lishman, cocking an eyebrow.

"Well, Mr. Hemenway's personal relations would make it unpleasant for him to approach the Falb people."

"In what way?" cried Hemenway, in blank astonishment. "I have no relations with the Falb Company."

"I didn't intend to discuss your private affairs," said Corrigan smoothly.

"Don't be a fool!" snapped the general manager. "If there's any underground work about these contracts, I've got to know it."

"I haven't got the ghost of an idea what he means," retorted Hemenway warmly.

Corrigan's suave cloak fell from him, disclosing the unashamed cave man.

"I suppose you didn't know that Miss Lefreyne's father has a controlling interest in Falb stock?" he said, thrusting out his heavy jaw.

"No, I didn't," replied Hemenway, more hotly than ever. "And if you

suggest that the knowledge would have influenced me in dealing with this firm's contracts, Corrigan, you're not only an unholy cad, but a plain damned liar!"

Lishman rose, a hulking figure of disgust.

"Get out, both of you!" he shouted. "I'll fix this thing when I've had time to look into it!"

Almost before he reached his desk, Hemenway's mind was made up with a snap.

It was not only that he was morally certain of receiving next day a curt memorandum instructing him to "bust" the Falb contract by any means that occurred to him. It was not that his power to do this was doubtful, or that Lishman would quietly sacrifice him if it became necessary to save his own face. It was not simply that his signature was on the Falb specifications. No, the main trouble lay in none of the things he would not or could not do, but in something that his rare, but flaring temper told him he must do at any cost, and without a moment's avoidable delay.

First, however, he paid the price in advance. He wrote out a brief letter of resignation, signed it with a venomous spurt of his pen, and dispatched it to Lishman by messenger.

"I've beaten him to that, anyway!" he said.

Then, with set face and raised shoulders, he walked straight over to Corrigan's office. He was in a white-hot temper, and looked it. The superintendent glanced up from his desk with a satisfied, gloating air that changed in a second to a stare of apprehension.

"You low-grade skunk!" said Hemenway, in a voice that he had to shade down to a near whisper before he could control it. "Off with those glasses!"

"Don't be a fool, Hemenway!" warned Corrigan, pushing back his

chair to face him. "Do you want to get yourself canned?"

"Off with them, I told you!" snapped Hemenway; and, receiving no compliance, he knocked them off Corrigan's face with the flat of his hand, so that they shot across the table and smashed against a radiator. "Now stand up!" he proceeded, stepping back a pace or two. "You've got to have it, you know."

Corrigan's face blackened with anger, and he leaped, rather than rose, to his feet. He leaped to meet halfway a smashing right on the nose, and before he could recover from it, a left and right to each eye sent him staggering and cursing against his desk.

"That's one for Miss Lefreyne, and one for Mr. Lefreyne, and one for myself," said Hemenway, regarding him fixedly. "Bring your dirty little spies to heel, Corrigan, and make 'Mind my own business' your wall motto—you swine!"

He cast at Corrigan the handkerchief with which he had wiped his bleeding knuckles, as if it were a thing befouled, and returned thoughtfully to his room. A moment later, he made for the elevator, and shook from his feet forever the dust of the Hayes-Bennett office.

As he stood on the sidewalk to await a street car, he had not a single regret. The reference to Alice Lefreyne had been unpardonable, and he would have been torn in pieces rather than allow it to go unpunished.

On the morrow, sitting with a sense of strangeness in his own dining room at an hour when he had always been downtown, remorse and regrets came thick and fast upon him. But it was not on Corrigan's account. It was owing to the discovery that he could not now afford to engage in a complex search for Susie Trainor.

For the first time since he had left her, it seemed, he had now a breath-

ing spell in which he might do some stubborn connected thinking; and the more he thought, the more his desertion of Susie appeared in the light of a crime indescribably cold and callous.

He thought steadily for some days, without improving the state of his digestion. Calculating that he could last several months without income, he took a vacation at Atlantic City to give his jangled nerves a tuning. He drove the car there, passed a luxurious and enjoyable time adorned with momentary periods of anxiety, met a crowd of people he knew, and spent a considerable sum of money. He swam and golfed and motored, he joined the high-ball parties in the afternoon, and at night frequented any scenes of hectic gayety he was able to discover.

He returned to the Wallington House, not refreshed, but worn out by his absurd rest cure. He lay about in the solitude of his apartment in a sort of interminable brown study, in the evening visiting the sort of cabarets at which he was unlikely to meet any one he knew. Always the very next day he was going to cut down expenses; always on the morrow he was going to face the problem of finding new employment; but always he would awake to the same nerveless and mechanical routine.

He understood at length, not without curiosity, that work of any sort was the last thing he wanted. The joy and desire of toil was dead within him, as were most other joys and desires. His nerve had broken, and he could not force himself back into the game. How he had reached that condition, he did not know. He was in excellent health; his head was clear and his hand steady. But the fact remained that, rather than enter a business office or write a ten-line business letter, he would sit still and allow himself to slide into the bread line.

The evanescent quality of unem-

ployed capital took him presently by surprise. In two months he sold his automobile, and a pile of unexpected and coincident bills swallowed more than he received for it. Rent day swept away most of his remaining balance.

Still he loafed, not a little astonished that he should do. Scanning the advertisements in the *Herald*, he presently found a man who was willing to take over his lease at the Wallington and pay him a fire-sale price for his furniture.

It was not that his friends deserted him. Human nature is infinitely better than its reputation. He could have raised thousands of dollars by a hint of difficulty. Indeed, young Denis Lefreyne went to the length of writing to him, inclosing a blank check, a note in the following terms of characteristic flamboyance:

OLD MAN: I have a suspicion you could use some money. I've told you once or twice what I've got. Go as far as you like if you want ready money. If you don't, burn the check. If you are offended by this impertinence, come and kick me.

Hemenway was not even tempted. His mind refused to do business even to the extent of filling in a blank check. He viewed the wreck of his life with a detached, impersonal, slightly whimsical interest. He was entirely incapable of taking a single step that was not forced on him by exterior existence. He thought of Kenyon, and how true his prophecy had been.

Psychosis commercialis is among the most real and terrible of modern diseases.

A month later, in the dead of winter, Hemenway moved out of the Wallington House with a single trunk and a few books, to seek an abode once more in the grime and noise and squalor of the "ave," some forty blocks south. Calling upon Sue's landlady,

he found her tiny room vacant, and took it eagerly. There was always the possibility that she might return.

In the meantime, what was the use?

He began to understand more clearly what his petulant predecessor Kenyon had meant when he had said that a man who has lost ambition is worse than dead.

CHAPTER XIII.

After the first plunge back into the old life, he regarded the appalling wreck of his existence with the casual disgust of a man who has dropped an egg. Something within him had ceased to function, just as the nerves of a wounded man become incapable, after a certain point, of transmitting the sensation of pain. A thousand fine instincts and sensibilities were mercifully blunted.

Thus he spent long weeks loafing in a sort of vacuous reverie. If now and then the approaching necessity, as well as the duty, of labor struck him, his mind promptly rejected the idea with an impervious, rubberlike resilience.

"Work—what for?" he asked himself.

Not for Alice Lefreyne, of course. That was a vanished dream. Even if he had wanted to marry her, he had dropped definitely out of her world.

Not for Susie—she had just as completely eliminated herself from his. It was one thing to seek her out and appear before her on the flood tide of fortune, a resident of the avenue, to beg forgiveness. It would have been quite another to present himself in the character of a penitent, reduced to the "ave."

Not for himself, least of all. He had a place to sleep and sufficient immediate sustenance, and he was temporarily incapable of wanting anything more.

When at last he found himself in imminent danger of starvation, he went

out, quite calmly and mechanically, and secured the job of selling a new nitrogen lamp on commission.

He had no office, no salary, no hours. He wandered round his East Side territory with samples, calling on tradespeople, and sold enough lamps to pay his rent in the "ave." He had sufficient money left over to dine roughly and meagerly, to pay for shoe leather, and to buy the soporific high ball that enabled him to sleep at night in oblivion of the harsh ugliness of his days.

For some time, even the tragic completeness of his isolation did not succeed in making itself felt. He was grateful for a space of solitude, a breathing spell after the whirling turmoil of the past year.

But just as the healing wound awakens the nerves to living torment, so Jack Hemenway's mind awoke to suffering, as the numbing shock of his submergence passed away. And in proportion as his nerves awoke to sensibility, so did the uncountable indignities, the thousand mean devices and sordid discomforts, of his new life begin to warp and disfigure him.

At last came a day when he felt that if he did not exchange a word with some friendly and familiar being, he would definitely lose his reason. He stopped his canvassing incontinently, and went from café to café in the business quarter west of Broadway, seeking some one he had known in his Hayes-Bennett days. It was with a thrill of joy that he presently recognized the emaciated figure of his embittered predecessor, Kenyon.

The man greeted him with a gleam of melancholy glee. Except that he was a trifle shabbier, a hint thinner and grayer, a little more fearfully tremulous in manner, Kenyon was unchanged.

With him was a stout and jovial man with bright red hair, who from time to time drove Kenyon to the verge of col-



He saw her start. He watched her gay smile fade into instant pallor.

lapse by slaps on the shoulder that were meant to be inspiring.

Hemenway knew him slightly as a clever, but surprisingly dissolute engineering draftsman, who had an office and worked when it pleased him. This was usually only when he needed money.

The red-haired man favored Hemenway, also, with an inspiring slap on the shoulder.

"Latest member of the God-Punish-Corrigan Society!" he chuckled. "Welcome to our midst, brother! George, see what Mr. Hemenway'll have, and

gimme a little booze. Mus' drink confusion to old Corrigan. Hic! Betcher-life!"

"I don't want God to punish anybody," replied Hemenway, much amused. "I attended to Corrigan myself."

A wolfish smile twisted Kenyon's soured face.

"Ain't you heard, Rowan? They had a mix-up at the last, and Hem left Corrigan with two black eyes—poached and scrambled ones! He wore them for weeks."

The red, jovial face of Rowan stared

blankly, slowly expanding into a fat and luscious smile. He threw wide his arms and hugged Hemenway to his stomach.

"You hit him?" he gasped. "You soaked that skunk in the eye? Heaven bless you, boy, for them glad tidings! George, li'l' more booze!"

He insisted on drinking confusion to Corrigan with some ceremony.

"Never joined in your silly dollar scuffle, myself," he explained. "It's—'scuse me!—undignified. Thash what! But Corrigan's too raw."

Kenyon drank hungrily.

"He's a damned devil," he said, in his querulous voice. "Once I had a home and a good job, and I'd fixed my wedding day. Now I sell bum rebuilt typewriters! It's all like some horrible dream."

And he clenched his fists and cursed Corrigan with inexpert fury, devising for him strange and disgusting torments.

"Gee, look what we've started!" said Rowan. "Le's take him some place else."

They went from bar to bar, drinking stupidly until far into the night.

"They had a shake-up after you left," related Kenyon, when he felt calmer. "Lishman was made vice president. But that damned devil didn't get his job! No, sir! The little old black eyes settled that. They sent for him, and he had to go. He'd tried to get 'em painted out, but it wasn't a success. The directors concluded he wasn't the class, and fetched in a managing director from the Interborough. What you doin' now, Hem?"

"Oh, nothing much, I'm afraid," replied Hemenway.

Rowan glanced at him sharply.

"There's a desk in my li'l' office," he said. "Instruments—all complete. I ain't much there, and I lose business. You might's well have it, Hem. I'll go you fifty-fifty on all you turn out."

Hemenway considered the idea for a space.

"I like the drawing part of it," he mused. "Maybe I'll drop in and talk it over some day."

They parted in the small hours with incoherent expressions of affectionate regard, and Hemenway returned to regard his pale, streaked face and swollen eyes in the blistered mirror of his bedroom.

"God! And it was this man that used to live in the avenue and wonder why his fellow creatures drank!" he muttered.

For a long time he lay prone and fully dressed on his dingy coverlet, confounded in unutterable shame. This was, he felt, to be his punishment. In his desertion of Susie, he had sold his soul; in his arrogant rejection of the love that might have saved him, he had mocked God.

He had not the spirit to save himself. When the nitrogen lamp proved no longer salable, he sought casual work from Rowan whereby he might drag on a dulled and meaningless existence.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was in this melancholy stage of his career, on a night in the first flush of a dreary and hopeless spring, that Jack Hemenway emerged from a saloon near Times Square. He plunged out into the crowd that made its exit from the theaters, a solid and almost unfordable stream of humanity filling both sidewalks. The roadway between was alive and clamant with automobiles. With a sudden stabbing recollection of past gayeties, he stood there, spellbound by the scene. This mighty pageant, in which he had once taken a joyous part, seemed now to be the passing of another world, more clean, more worthy, happier, than his own.

As he gazed with a sort of detached and furtive admiration, there appeared

before his burning, melancholy eyes a vision that shocked and agonized him with the pang of a knife thrust into the heart—a vision of Susie, radiant in the electric glare of the sidewalk, emerging from some playhouse on the arm of a strange man in evening clothes.

Trembling like a victim of the ague, Hemenway stared in a continually intensified agony of reminiscence. Not for a moment did he doubt his eyes. There was only one Susie Trainor.

The splendid, shimmering shoulders that showed above the careless wrap of pale-blue satin were the shoulders that had worn the white linen uniform of the Sunshine Restaurants. The white neck, strong as a pillar, gleamed now with roped pearls; but it was the same rounded neck that had shown above the humble print frock of other days. The rich golden hair was swept back in the same simple waves, to the same heavy, burnished knot at the back. The eyes that were happily laughing, dazlingly blue under the electric lights, were the same eyes that had challenged him in the breakers off Long Island.

As she approached him in the splendor of her gallant young womanhood, he drew back panic-stricken into the shadow of the saloon entrance. To his dismay, she stopped with her companion at the edge of the sidewalk, directly in front of him.

Behind her walked several others, men and women, apparently of the same party. They joined her, chattering gayly. Again Hemenway's heart leaped and stood still in blank astonishment, as he recognized in one of the girls, a delicate, vivid little creature who turned her face momentarily to the light, the unforgettable fairylike personality of Alice Lefreynne.

His first instinctive desire to seek safety in the saloon was overwhelmed by the absolute incredibility of the association. He remained paralyzed by amazement.

The Lefreynes' big limousine swept up to the sidewalk, driven by the unmistakable Jensen, Apollo turned mechanic. The women entered, bestowing themselves carefully in the thickly upholstered interior.

Then Alice Lefreynne happened to turn her bright, ecstatic gaze out of the window, and looked suddenly straight into Hemenway's eyes.

He saw her start. He watched her gay smile fade into instant pallor. She turned her head away, and appeared to address herself to the man who took his seat beside her. The door of the limousine slammed, the armored tires spun. With a musical blast of its horn, the great machine swept out into the brilliant stream of Broadway.

No sooner was it out of sight around the corner than Hemenway began to doubt the evidence of his eyes. The thing was so absurdly impossible. He wondered if he had fallen a victim to delusions. Perhaps a man could fancy he saw other things than pink rats. Bah!

If he was seeing visions, he was so much nearer the end!

Laughing grimly, he set off around the corner into Broadway. And before he had taken a dozen paces, he met Susie Trainor face to face, and was gazing with stupid wonder into her glorious eyes, listening dumbly to her rich and thrilling voice, trembling anew at the touch of her hand on his sleeve.

"Jack! So it is you—after all this time! Alice told me—I made them stop and put me down. I told them you would take me home."

That was all. No hint of surprise at his shabby raiment, his warped shoes, his unkempt hair. No sign that she remarked the ravages of solitude and excess in his strained and sunken features. No smallest inflexion of voice to show that she saw in him any other than the lover of her Sunshine days.

And Hemenway? He looked upon

the richness of her attire, the pearls that gleamed on her broad white bosom, the thousand remembered graces of her that revealed themselves under the electric glare of Broadway—and he gently shook off her detaining hand.

"You mustn't," he said, in a voice choked with pain. "Nothing's the same now, Sue. You shouldn't have come back. Really, you know you shouldn't have come back."

Susie drew herself up to her full height, which was no mean height for a woman. There was in her bearing a commanding stateliness that was entirely foreign to his recollection.

"Jack Hemenway," she said, in a tone of surprise and reproof, "have you forgotten good manners since I saw you last? You see that I'm not dressed for the street. Have the goodness to call a taxi and take me home."

Weakly he complied. Susie held the door open.

"You get in first," she said. "I'm not going home in a taxi by myself."

Hemenway hesitated, murmuring incoherent protests, his eyes burning with the wonder of her.

"You know it's wrong," he said. "I'm not fit— You mustn't speak to me. Sue, I'm as good as a dead man!"

"Damn your nonsense!" cried Susie, in a sudden burst of impatience. "You do as I tell you! Weren't you running round to every lunch room in town hunting for me? Do you think I don't know—everything? Get in, for the love of Heaven, and don't be such a fool!"

Hemenway got in. Susie leaned out of the window on the other side and whispered to the driver, and they shot away swiftly—to the obvious disappointment of the knot of spectators who had gathered with the instantaneous *flair* of the Broadway idler.

Hemenway remained spellbound as the passing lights flashed on Susie's

brilliant, excited face. She seemed to be struggling against tears, and chattered incessantly, hastening to laugh lest she might be compelled to cry. The dazed wonder in his eyes moved her to explanations.

"It was all Aunt Mawford's work," she said. "You remember—the stout woman who pushed you out of her way? Well, when I broke down and couldn't work, and everything seemed hopeless, I went to her, to see if she would look out for little Dallas. I nearly died with surprise when I saw her. She was ill, and so-broken and scared she seemed like some one else. She took me to Europe for the summer, and when she came back, she gave me an apartment near her own house, so she wouldn't have to be alone any more. This is her jewelry that she lets me wear. She's just foolish about my little girl."

The taxi turned into West End Avenue. Susie chattered on, with forced, feverish gayety, until it drew up at one of the apartment houses near the Wallington House. She left the payment of the driver to the gilt-edged doorman, dragging Hemenway after her to the elevator. It was not until a tiny Japanese maid had admitted them that she drew breath, vanishing to rid herself of her wraps.

Hemenway awaited her in dire confusion of mind. He felt acutely out of place in the pretty boudoir, with its dainty woman things scattered around, its air of luxury and good taste. Susie returned in a moment, a breathing vision in pale-green silk.

He stood amazed at the change in her manner and accent. Even her face seemed more ethereal than before, more delicate in its dimpled health. Her speech was entirely transformed, so that unconsciously he began to edit his own, roughened by brutal contacts. They stopped before a photograph in

a silver frame, a young and smooth face full of hope and courage.

"Lord, to think that fellow was me!" said Hemenway. "But—I don't understand! I gave that to Alice Lefreyne."

"Alice lent it to me," replied Susie. "The Lefreyne's are friends of Aunt Mawford's, you know. One day, when we were talking about—things in general—it all came out at once! Alice and I— Why, we put our arms round each other and cried over you, Jack, like two fools. She's the sweetest, cleverest, dearest girl in the world!"

She searched his quivering face.

"Alice told me everything, Jack," she added, more gravely. "She told me everything from beginning to end. I felt sure, somehow, that I should find you again."

Hemenway turned away and sat down.

"Sue, I've been living in your old room in the 'ave.' And here you are in the avenue, turned into a splendid lady, a woman the best man on earth might be proud to win."

"Oh, I'm just made over a little. I nearly broke Aunt Mawford's heart in Paris. It was hard, at first—but I was a trier." She stretched out her white arms in a kind of ecstasy. "Ye-ah!" she cried. "Ain't I the queen these days, at that? Gee, some bear cat they've made of poor Susie Trainor! Jack Hemenway, wouldn't you like me now?"

She stood smiling down at him, gloriously challenging, infinitely desirable. He knew now that in the touch of her hand there was the strength he lacked, the inspiration to life and work that he could find nowhere else. For a time remorse choked him. He buried his face in his hands, shaking with unspeakable shame.

"If I had known!" he said. "I might have done it just as easily. I might have taken you up with me, Sue—I know you would have come. I might

have made you what you are; the credit might have been all mine. We would have been there together now, proud and happy in each other. And I—poor fool!—I thought you couldn't learn!"

"I'm just the same, really," said Susie simply. "Listen, Jack!" She changed in an instant to the hard, metallic tone of the Irish girl with the haughty carriage. "Three up—side o' beans an' French fried. Draw one on the dark. Ham and. Get-a-move-on-with-them - butter - cakes-fertherlover-gawd!"

She finished with an excited little laugh, and threw herself down on the arm of his chair. At the mere touch of her, the old thrill ran through him, awakening to life a thousand forgotten emotions.

"Sue, it's no use!" he groaned. "You've got to let me go before I do you any more harm. Surely you can see for yourself how it is! I'm a—I *drink*, Sue! You've no idea how I drink!"

A sob broke from him, shaking his bent shoulders. He felt her fingers in his hair, ruffling it in the old caressing way.

"My dear, I know!" she whispered. "Everything! And it's all my fault. I knew just what would happen—women know these things ever so much better—and I let you go! Just out of crazy pride, because it stung me to think you cared for some one else! Do you think I'm going to do it again?"

"You must, Sue! I can't—I'm killing myself, and I can't stop! God help me, I can't stop it!"

"Are you always going to be a fool, Jack Hemenway?" Her voice was low and earnest. "Haven't we wasted enough of our lives already? You know you simply don't dare to leave me again!"

Her arms crept around his heaving shoulders, infinitely caressing, magically soothing. Abruptly he realized that

she had spoken the truth—he knew that he would not dare to part from her finally, to face again the life he had been living, to cast himself anew into the morass in which he had been sinking so swiftly.

"My God, it's true!" he whispered. "I don't dare!"

And he turned and clung to her, shuddering like a terrified, penitent child. The golden aura that enveloped her, the vital influence of her rich womanhood, flowed through him in all its power to soothe and heal. Magically he drew from the generous warmth of her single-hearted love new life and strength and hope.

He walked home with a burning hunger in his throat, it is true, but it did not prevent him from laughing defiance at the saloons.

For the first time in months, instead of crawling up the stairs to his humble room in slack dejection, he sprang up them in long strides. For the first time in months, he looked forward eagerly to the work of the morrow, and rose fresh and active.

He landed a fat contract for Rowan, as luck would have it, and the red-haired man insisted on dragging him off to a saloon. He drank greedily. Others joined them, and the old senseless alcoholic round commenced in all its imbecile, devastating swiftness.

Suddenly there was a crash. Rowan turned to see Hemenway standing in the middle of the floor, his second glass shattered at his feet, its contents spuming on the red tiles of the saloon.

"What's happened, Hem? Sworn off?" he demanded humorously.

"As it happens, that's just what I have done," replied Hemenway, loudly enough for all to hear. "A man can't go on doing the same damn-fool thing all his life, Rowan."

And he returned to the drawing office. That evening, when the hunger gripped him in all its cruel force, he

was safe in Susie's boudoir, making the acquaintance of Dallas.

The child was the most delicious human creature he had ever seen, an amusing miniature of Susie, with her blue eyes and fair hair and strong, straight legs. She sat on his knee and felt his clean-shaven chin, and returned personal thanks for a certain expensive doll that was the apple of her eye.

"I knew you would love her," said Susie, with melting eyes.

"How could I help loving anything that was yours?" he replied.

CHAPTER XV.

In the late fall of that year the slanting sunshine of a Saturday afternoon fell through the windows of an office in the Knickerbocker Building upon a strikingly metamorphosed Jack Hemenway. He sat in shirt sleeves, his long figure bent low over a drawing board, and his breath whistled between his teeth as he worked with pencil and instruments on a complicated drawing.

On the windows was the sign "Rowan & Hemenway," in fat gilt letters, easily legible from the Broadway sidewalk. The doors conveyed the additional information that these gentlemen were consulting civil and electrical engineers. A workman in overalls, busily painting the same names on another door across the corridor, gave a cheerful hint of expansion.

Hemenway finished, leaped blithely to his feet, and cocked his head at the drawing board with approval. Then, with a glance at the clock, he locked the door of the drawing office and dived into the smaller room, which had originally constituted Rowan's business premises. Donning his coat and hat, he returned to find that the door he had just locked was again ajar.

He exclaimed with astonishment at the spectacle of Rowan, his stout Silenus of a partner, red-faced and

grunting in his shirt sleeves. Rowan turned to him a face that gave evidence of a degree of sobriety almost incredible on a Saturday afternoon.

"Hello, Hem!" he shouted. "Just through?"

"Yes. Got a date," replied Hemenway, staring. "But what on earth brought you back on a holiday?"

Rowan waved a sheaf of blue prints at him and cursed genially.

"You've infected me with your damned dollar fever," he asserted, in boyish embarrassment. "I've just landed a fat new contract, and I wanted to get it doped out. You'll kill me with overwork before you've finished, you perishing prohibitionist! Say, what are you all dolled up for? Date with a dame?"

"Two dames," laughed Hemenway.

"No wonder you're so greedy for money! But what am I going to do with all the scads you're making me earn? I don't seem to get time to enjoy life like I useter. Say, remember that time we came in loaded one Saturday and painted blue monkeys all over a hundred-dollar job? It seems ages ago!"

"It is—dark ages," laughed Hemenway, with a reminiscent twinge. He laid a hand on his partner's huge shoulder. "It isn't the money, Rowan," he said. "That's good, I admit, and I've got a use for it all. But what really matters is that we're growing and building and reaching out to bigger things. We're taking our share of the work as well as the pay. You know you wouldn't go back to the old times."

"Maybe. But I'm dog-goned if I know why," grunted Rowan. "I seem to be getting the office habit bad."

There was a ring at the outer door, and a sweet little voice demanded "Uncle Jack." Hemenway dashed out, to return with Susie and little Dallas. Rowan stood smiling an embarrassed smile, and combing his fiery locks with

a pencil point while they exchanged pretty commonplaces. But when Hemenway bore them off into Broadway, Rowan watched them wistfully from the window.

They made an attractive trio—Susie big, bonny, and bouncing, walking with her brave, easy grace; little Dallas a ravishing mite in her white lace frock and pink sash, holding Hemenway's finger and shaking her curls roguishly as she gazed up at him in admiration.

"Ugh!" grunted Rowan. "I'd hate like hell to be handsome!"

And he went back to his blue prints with a sigh.

Hemenway and his "dames" caught a motor bus and drove through the lively spectacle of the shopping district to call on Aunt Mawford in Riverside Drive. Latterly it had become a sort of observance on which Mrs. Mawford insisted.

Alas, she could no longer be described as imposing. The deflation of Aunt Mawford was too pathetically permanent. She received them in the boudoir of her florid white house, sitting in a wheel chair, the mere sagging and wrinkled envelope of her once billowing presence. She retained, however, certain of her temperamental characteristics. At her side she kept a long black cane with an ivory head, the use of which was a mystery—unless you assumed that it was for the purpose of pushing people out of her way.

When the call had lasted the regulation period and Hemenway rose to take his leave, Mrs. Mawford sent Dallas to subterranean regions with a promise of dainties, and waved him back to his chair imperatively.

"When are you two going to get married?" she most astonishingly demanded.

Hemenway stammered and turned in helpless appeal to Susie. It was the first time since their reunion that the subject had even been mentioned.

"Jack's doing very well," said Susie. "Next year perhaps——"

"Next fiddleticks!" said Aunt Mawford pushfully. "Young people these days seem to have no red blood in their veins. Why don't you make it next month? You've been fooling around long enough, Heaven knows!"

"But I'm only just starting," Mrs. Mawford," objected Hemenway. "The business is promising, but it'll take a lot of hard work to make it prosperous."

"You talk a lot of nonsense," said Aunt Mawford. "You're everlastingly going to do things some time next year. I want to see Susan settled, now that she has found somebody who is at least—of whom, in short, I can approve. Ahem! I'm not thinking of dying—don't imagine that! I'm going to live a long time yet. But all young people should be married." She turned to Susie. "Of course, my dear Susan, I should continue your allowance. I wouldn't leave you at the mercy of any man again. Run away now, and fix a day, and make it next month, so that I may be present before I go South. Dallas will stay and dine with me."

They departed accordingly. In the hall they encountered Dallas, nibbling a sugar wafer.

"Come and kiss your new papa, dear," said Susie.

The child ran up expectantly, to discover with disappointment that the hall curtains concealed no more novel being than Hemenway.

"That's not a papa," she said. "That's only Uncle Jack."

"Won't you have me for a papa?" demanded Hemenway.

Dallas swung to and fro on the curtain, nibbling her wafer and eying him with delightful coquetry. He held out his hands.

"You'd have to come and taking us," she bargained.

"I promise," answered Hemenway.

Suddenly the child flew to him like a needle to a magnet, and he took her into his arms, as he had long ago taken her into his heart. It seemed that there was simply nothing more to be said. He walked with Susie into the pleasant quiet of West End Avenue and down toward the "ave."

Again, as she gazed up at him, he looked out upon the world in courage and high hope, and for the first time began to see it clearly and to see it whole. And there was no longer in his world the "ave" and the avenue, but one long artery of human life and progress.

He saw that the avenue was merely the "ave" removed a generation from the warping, stunting fear of want. He saw the children of the mean and stunted peoples of the "ave" springing up in graceful strength and beauty to become the people of the avenue in time to come. The people of the avenue were even now the people of the "ave," rising and falling, as he had risen and fallen, in constant flux, perpetually fusing together into the republic of the future.

The future—that was all that mattered! To work with all his might for the generations to follow, to lay truly and build strong and fair his part of the world to come, to be found worthy to stretch forward into the brightening ages, enriching them with whatever of beauty and worth he could achieve—that was to defy death itself, that was the part of a man.

The road lay straight before him, the dear burden ready to his hand. Inspired by a gleam of the Universal Purpose, he bent and reverently kissed the girl at his side.

THE COST OF PEACE

By Emily Newell Blair

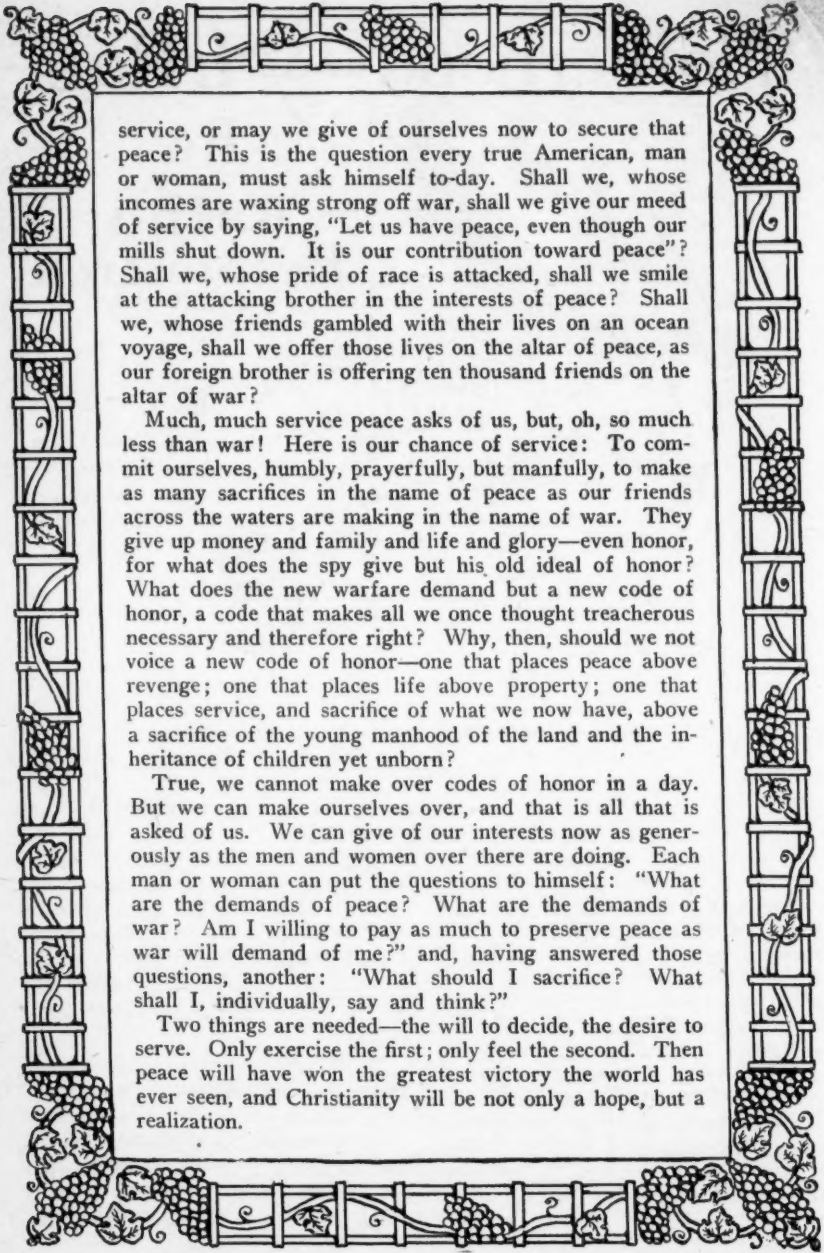
OVER across the water men of every country are forgetting all thought of self and offering their lives on the altars of patriotism. Whatever we may think of the justice of his cause, we must acknowledge that the common soldier who leaves home and children to make a target of himself, under the impression that he is defending that home and those children, is a hero. He is more of a hero now, when he does it without a scarlet uniform to appeal to his vanity, without a blare of drums to fire his blood, than in the old days.

Over there are women leaving their little ones day after day to push a plowshare over rough furrows or to mow the grain. There are other women sitting strained over machines that cut out garments for the men. There are lonesome women carrying the mail over dangerous roads. There are women behind counters waiting on other women, whole towns and villages deserted of men. And there are women who have never toiled before, women with white hands and weak backs, who have donned the garb of mercy and are sitting up through long nights in dimly lighted corridors doing duty against that arch-enemy of all, the angel of death. Other women, delicately nurtured, highly cultivated, are scrubbing floors.

Over there even the little children have forgotten self. They no longer cling to mother's skirts. Boys are hustling for food. Little girls sew feverishly, or knit, or cut bandages. Babies cry softly in their cradles. The newborn sigh for their first breath.

Over there are war and famine and pestilence and—service; service which is the one ray of hope in all that dark and loathsome spell of men gone mad. A ray of hope because it tells us that desire for life, for health, for peace, is not dead, and so long as this desire is—for another's life, another's health, another's peace, Christianity still lives in the hearts of men.

Such is the service rendered to war and its minions. But must we wait until the peace that is tugging desperately has broken loose from its moorings before we render



service, or may we give of ourselves now to secure that peace? This is the question every true American, man or woman, must ask himself to-day. Shall we, whose incomes are waxing strong off war, shall we give our meed of service by saying, "Let us have peace, even though our mills shut down. It is our contribution toward peace"? Shall we, whose pride of race is attacked, shall we smile at the attacking brother in the interests of peace? Shall we, whose friends gambled with their lives on an ocean voyage, shall we offer those lives on the altar of peace, as our foreign brother is offering ten thousand friends on the altar of war?

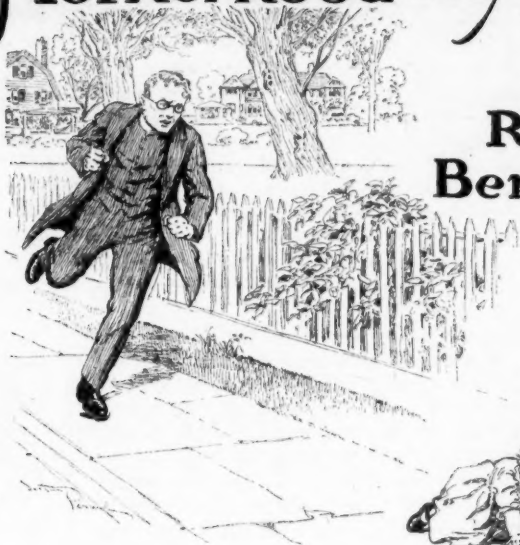
Much, much service peace asks of us, but, oh, so much less than war! Here is our chance of service: To commit ourselves, humbly, prayerfully, but manfully, to make as many sacrifices in the name of peace as our friends across the waters are making in the name of war. They give up money and family and life and glory—even honor, for what does the spy give but his old ideal of honor? What does the new warfare demand but a new code of honor, a code that makes all we once thought treacherous necessary and therefore right? Why, then, should we not voice a new code of honor—one that places peace above revenge; one that places life above property; one that places service, and sacrifice of what we now have, above a sacrifice of the young manhood of the land and the inheritance of children yet unborn?

True, we cannot make over codes of honor in a day. But we can make ourselves over, and that is all that is asked of us. We can give of our interests now as generously as the men and women over there are doing. Each man or woman can put the questions to himself: "What are the demands of peace? What are the demands of war? Am I willing to pay as much to preserve peace as war will demand of me?" and, having answered those questions, another: "What should I sacrifice? What shall I, individually, say and think?"

Two things are needed—the will to decide, the desire to serve. Only exercise the first; only feel the second. Then peace will have won the greatest victory the world has ever seen, and Christianity will be not only a hope, but a realization.

Motherhood and Mr Roe

By
Ralph
Bergengren



Author of "Mrs. Bright
and the Big Four,"
"The Demon and
Miss Brook,"
etc.



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

The effect of a small nephew upon the theories of the Reverend Mr. Roe. A story that will delight all Tired Mothers.

THERE are some moments, big with destiny, when the ticking of a clock or the chirping of a canary seems to fill the universe; when a pin falling to the floor is as startling as a grandmother falling down cellar; when time appears to stop for breath and the world to cease from spinning round and round on its axis. Yet the occasion is not necessarily of wide importance. It may, indeed, concern no more than two persons, provided, of course, that you are one of them.

Such a pause cannot last indefinitely, or the two persons would die. Miss Victoria Carter repeated the question that had produced it:

"And you believe all that nonsense

you preached last Sunday?" she said wonderingly.

The Reverend John Percival Roe, a tall young man whose friends shortened his name to Percy, grew perceptibly taller. He stiffened. His pleasant, smooth-shaven, youthful mouth set in a straight line and his eyes turned cold behind his round tortoise-shell spectacles.

"I did!" he said firmly. "I certainly meant it. And if you, Victoria, consider what I said nonsense——"

"If I considered it anything else," said Victoria, "I should go to the fool killer and say, 'Here I am.'"

Mr. Roe put his hands in his pock-

ets. He spoke desperately, but with restrained exasperation.

"If anything," he said, "I did not put the case strongly enough. You have only to look about you, and read the newspapers, and——"

"The newspapers!" exclaimed Victoria. "My dear Percy, if somebody from another planet judged us by the newspapers, he'd hardly imagine that nice, quiet, reasonably decent people, like most of those you and I know, had any existence."

"I am sorry to have to say," said the Reverend Mr. Roe, "that I have observed in my own sister——"

"If you *were* your own sister," continued Miss Carter reflectively, "you would know a great deal more than you do about motherhood. A lot more. Of course you must realize, Percy, that if you really think what you say you think, no sensible girl would ever consent to marry you. And, on the other hand, if you *didn't* think you think what you say you think, you'd be an old hypocrite. I suppose what I mean, dear, is that if you would only think again, you would think differently."

For a moment, the Reverend Mr. Roe almost looked as if he were going to make a determined effort to think again. Then he steeled himself. A man who has preached a sermon has put himself on record. He took his hands out of his pockets, and picked up his gloves from the table.

"It's better that we should have discovered this difference in—in an important point of view now than later, Victoria," he said gloomily. "I suppose this is the end."

"Unless you think again," said Victoria steadily.

"I have thought already," declared Mr. Roe.

From these concluding sentences of the conversation, it may be gathered that the Reverend Percy Roe and Miss Victoria Carter had been what is called

"engaged," and that a vital difference of opinion, an unbridgeable chasm, had rendered their engagement no longer possible. It was a tragedy, acted in the incongruously cheerful setting of the Carter drawing-room, with no audience but a yellow canary. The exit of Mr. Roe was rather spoiled by the necessity for stopping in the front hall to put on his spring overcoat. He should have gone out quickly and continued through the front door without stopping. Victoria should have rushed upstairs, sobbing, and have thrown herself on her bed, one hand crushing her tiny lace handkerchief. As the "Old Author's Almanac" might say, "About now expect a tempest of tears." But Victoria Carter's handkerchief and nature were equally large and sensible. Instead of going to bed, she went out into the garden and continued the agricultural operations that the coming of Mr. Roe had interrupted.

"He didn't mean it," said Victoria—or would have, if she had said anything—"but he thinks he did, and that's just as bad."

As for Mr. Roe, the day being one of those raw days that sometimes occur in June, he buttoned his spring coat and walked briskly to his bachelor quarters, savagely congratulating himself. His eyes were at last open. He saw clearly that he had never known Victoria, and that Victoria had never known him. They were both fortunate to have escaped a marriage that could have led only to unhappiness. For the time being, Mr. Roe was so astonished by the closeness of this escape that he fled, so to speak, without looking back. The experience gave him a new and shuddering realization of how easy it might be for two perfectly honest, conscientious young persons to make the horrible mistake of marrying without really knowing each other. If, for example, he had not preached his sermon on motherhood——

Observation, the newspapers, and the necessity for preaching a sermon, had convinced Mr. Roe that mothers, take them all together, were no longer like the mother of Abraham Lincoln. And he had composed a sermon in this conviction.

"It is a grievous thing for this nation," he had said only last Sunday, "that a change is coming over our women. Far too many of them—and how shall I find words to express the profound grief, the unspeakable dismay, with which I note their daily increasing number?—regard the sacred and wonderful business of motherhood as an obscure and commonplace task that may be relegated to paid subordinates. Mothering is left to hirelings! In this modern life, teeming with so many deceptively important interests—for Satan is a shrewd fellow—the most important interest of all is neglected. The beautiful and intimate relation of mother and child is replaced by the practical and commercial relation of infant and nursemaid. Can we imagine the infant Abraham Lincoln in a perambulator pushed by alien hands, while his mother dashed here and there to play bridge, to dance the tango, or to wave the banner of 'Votes for Women'?"

Motherhood, said Mr. Roe in effect, is an all-day job, paying high wages in

the joy of watching the little mind unfold like a flower, and in the emotional thrill—far more wholesome than the emotional thrill derived from the acrobaticism of Russian ballet dancers



Jumping a baby twelve or fourteen times in succession becomes a strenuous exercise.

—imparted by tugging baby fingers. And woe, woe, woe to a nation whose mothers agitated for shorter hours! Babyhood, he reminded his hearers, is too brief a period to lose a single hour, or a single minute, of this association between the child and its mother. Yet he knew mothers, estimable women in many ways, who declared that a day with the child *tired* them!

"The Tired Business Man," said Mr. Roe feelingly, "is bad enough, but the Tired Mother is worse."

In the city, a Monday-morning newspaper headlined its report of the sermon: "Reverend Roe Laments Tired Mothers." For some reason or other, the Monday-morning papers often referred to his sermons as lamentations.

Then Victoria, in the immodest way of young women nowadays, had looked forward, and, to all intents and purposes, had declared herself a Tired Mother in advance. And as Mr. Roe believed he believed everything he had said, he was in no way likely to take any of it back. It was evident to him that he would never marry. Despite his disappointment in Victoria, he knew, in fact, that he would be hereafter immune to any romantic attraction—even if he met the most beautiful widow in the world, and observed her devoting all her time to companionship with her children. As regards the opposite sex, there would be an aloofness about him, courteous, but cold, perhaps not altogether unbecoming, like a "No Trespassing" sign on a ruined life partly covered with ivy. The fact is significant that he stopped exercising to keep down his weight. Also, but without realizing the intemperance, he smoked more than he would ordinarily have considered good for him.

On the Thursday following this lamentation and its distressing, but fortunate consequences—still unknown to the world at large—Mr. Roe went to spend the day with his married sister.

This weekly visit was a habit, a period of rest in the "country" before the Friday preparation of his coming sermon. Preaching in a suburb just out of the city, he found this retreat to a small, elm-shaded old town, twenty-odd miles farther away, a restful break in his week's duties.

Mr. Roe was fond of his sister; he liked his brother-in-law, who commuted daily to win a modest salary; but he had been compelled reluctantly to include their household in his lamentation. The Martins had one child, and Mrs. Martin employed a hireling to take care of Henry William Roe Martin. A hireling, to be sure, who attended the high school, and could be on duty only after school hours, but the fact stood out that Mrs. Martin was a Tired Mother; and Mr. Roe's spear, in somewhat the words of an older and better-known jousting knight, knew no sister.

Mrs. Martin came from the telephone as her brother entered the living room.

"It's so tiresome!" she declared frankly. "Mabel Cox has just telephoned me that there's a perfectly lovely auction going on in Norwell. She wants to pick me up with her car and drive over. We wouldn't be gone more than an hour, but of course I can't leave baby. I shall be glad when vacation comes, and Mary can be here all day."

Mr. Roe spoke, frowning.

"If you *wish* to leave the baby," he said, with the air of suggesting an idea that any mother should refuse as monstrous, "I will take care of him."

"Percy," said Mrs. Martin, "your public views are often absurd, but in private life you are a *dear*. I'll try to get Mabel before she starts. Baby is asleep in his carriage on the porch. He's such a good-natured mite, so long as he is amused, that I'm sure you'll have no trouble at all. I'd ask cook to look out for him, but I don't dare to. I don't think she likes children. Any-

way, I shall be back before you get very tired."

"You needn't hurry on that account," said Mr. Roe, with a bitter cheerfulness that he had been practicing for some days. "I am not a mother, but I shall not get tired."

"More!" said Henry William Roe Martin. "Baby jump!"

They were on the lawn, half an hour after Mrs. Martin had disappeared auctionward in her friend's motor car, and in response to this request, the Reverend Mr. Roe took his nephew under the arms and lifted him high in the air, his small feet waving ecstatically. Then he set him down and drew a long breath, for jumping a baby twelve or fourteen times in succession becomes a strenuous exercise.

"More!" said Henry William expectantly.

"Uncle Percy, my dear sir," said Mr. Roe, "was reading a book when you woke up. Wouldn't you like him to read book to you? Read, baby, eh?"

"Baby jump!" said Henry William, with an air of determination.

"Very well," agreed Mr. Roe. "One more jump. Now, then!" He jumped baby as high as he could reach, for good measure, put him down, and handed him a large rubber ball, which he had found in the perambulator. "Baby roll," he suggested.

At this suggestion, with the sudden change of interest that is one of the charms of the unfolding mind, Henry William Roe Martin made a strange guttural noise, expressing satisfaction and terminating in what is called a spit bubble. He was at that especially cunning and endearing age when tottering limbs perform wonders of unstable locomotion, and he proceeded to roll the rubber ball with great earnestness. It became the most important thing then happening in the world, and Mr. Roe might reasonably have been expected

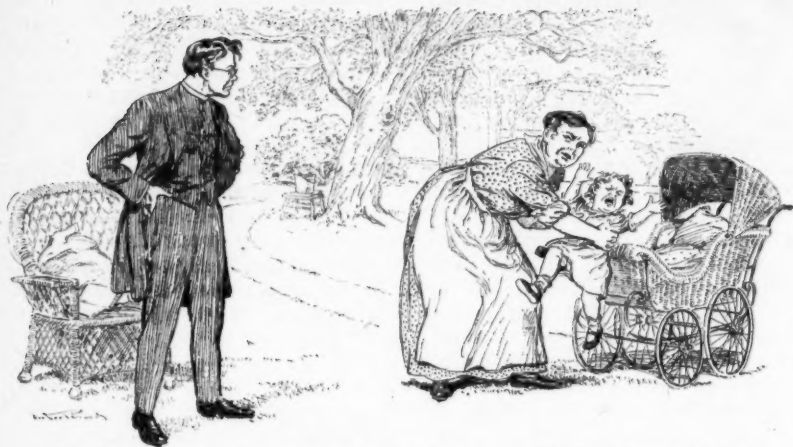
to continue watching the process with rapt enjoyment. But Mr. Roe, as he had just explained, had been reading when his nephew woke up, and perhaps the habit of reading was stronger in him than the habit of mothering. Without even stopping to think that a man can read any time, whereas opportunities to watch a baby rolling a ball occur infrequently for a bachelor, he sat down on the steps and reopened his volume.

He finished his chapter, remembered his nephew, and glanced over the top of the book to see what had become of him.

The lawn was empty. No baby, no rubber ball—

With an exclamation of some surprise—which sounded almost like annoyance—Mr. Roe laid down his book, hurried to the edge of the lawn, and peered, first one way and then the other, along the village street. In the middle of that street, far away, and heading for a corner that led to the business part of the town, Henry William Roe Martin rolled his rubber ball earnestly, as if it had occurred to him that it would be a fine thing to roll it right around the world, and that now was a good time to start. The thought of what would happen if a motor car came round that corner sent a chill running up Mr. Roe's spine and his feet running along the peaceful village thoroughfare.

He was rather a plump young man, no sprinter, soon out of breath—but he felt that this was a race between himself and some unseen juggernaut. The prize was his nephew. He breathed hard, but he hit up the pace. An invisible assassin drove a dagger between his ribs, but he set his teeth, defied heart failure, and lifted his feet with determined animation. He beat Henry William to the corner, grasped him under his arms, and stood him on the sidewalk. His arrival and behavior might



She picked up the baby, and, with a look of open contempt at the Reverend Percy Roe, carried it out of sight toward the kitchen.

fairly have been called sudden, but nothing ever surprises a baby.

"More!" said Henry William commandingly. "Baby jump!"

"No," panted Mr. Roe, mopping his forehead. "Baby bad. Baby run away. No jump."

"No jump," agreed his nephew, again changing the current of thought with the ease of babyhood. He caught his uncle by the little finger and pulled vigorously toward the line of shops visible from around the corner. He took short steps back and forth, tugging at the finger. "Walk baby!" said Henry William. "Walk! Walk!"

And Mr. Roe, feeling the thrill of those tugging fingers, remembered that it was sometimes part of his sister's program to take the baby with her when she went marketing.

"No," said Mr. Roe. "No walk. Uncle tired. Run. Uncle winded. Baby come home and play on lawn. Nice baby. Baby wants to play on lawn."

"No play," said Henry William. "Baby walk." He looked up at his

uncle with a face that all at once became wrinkled like the face of an old man. It frowned at its uncle. Its mouth quivered.

"No play!" repeated Henry William. "Walk!"

"All right," said Uncle Percy quickly. "Come on, sir."

It was the first time that the Reverend Mr. Roe had ever taken a baby to walk. Without describing his experience in detail, he discovered several new ideas: that it requires tact and patience of a high order to overcome a baby's desire to walk in the middle of the street or wade in the gutter; that the pleasure of throwing stones in a puddle, however interesting to the unfolding mind, becomes monotonous to an adult; that one baby meeting another baby will insist upon stopping to exchange the latest news of that mysterious world they inhabit, however embarrassing the situation may be for a clerical gentleman and a nursemaid who have no previous acquaintance; that a baby who has been over a given route will remember the spots of inter-

est—especially the grocery store, where experience has taught it to expect a cooky—and insist upon visiting them. Mr. Roe, moreover, had a generous nature; he purchased a stick of molasses candy before observation had taught him the ability of a baby to eat all over itself. And then, for a while, the baby insisted upon being carried; he stuck to his uncle, so to speak, with love and molasses. The wonder of it was that eventually they got back to the lawn from which they had started. To Mr. Roe, it had the look of a place with which he had been long ago familiar. There was the porch, the perambulator, the book that he had been reading, the green grass across which, ages ago, he had looked over the top of his book—

"Ball!" said Henry William suddenly. "Ball! Ball!"

At this suggestion, a feeling of hopelessness came over Mr. Roe. He looked back as far as he could see along the road they had just traveled. He assumed an expression of jocular merriment combined with serious explanation.

"All gone," he said. "Bad ball run away. Lost. No ball. Baby jump?"

The baby sat down. It was as if he felt it unnecessary even to notice the idea of jumping. Again he began to look like a puzzled old man. His wrinkles reappeared; he merged rapidly from perplexity into gloom, and from gloom into despair.

"Ball!" he repeated. "Ball! Ball!"

"I—tell—you—" said the Reverend Percy Roe, with no less earnestness, "that—your—silly—ball—is—lost! You—won't—get—it—by—yowling!"

Evidently Henry William did not agree with his uncle. Tears, in his brief life, had accomplished much. He wept. Sitting on the tetter June grass, he pounded it with his chubby fists and wailed for the unattainable. There was no stopping him. Grief for his great loss changed rapidly to indignation at

this uncle, who was responsible for it; indignation passed into rage. The world should know how he was being treated by this uncle!

"By gracious!" exclaimed the Reverend Mr. Roe. "I'm getting tired of this! I'm getting tired of this!"

He looked along the street. There was no sign of his sister—but that was just like her! He had known, when she had said an hour, that she would actually be back when he saw her, neither sooner nor later. He looked at his watch; it would be more than an hour before the high school would release the hireling. He mopped his forehead. If the child continued to cry like this, it would cry itself to death. With despair in his heart, the Reverend Mr. Roe got down on his hands and knees and made queer noises and even queerer gestures, imitative of wild animals in their native jungles. But Henry William had no interest in zoölogy. He wanted his ball. He no longer looked like an old man; he looked like an open mouth. His uncle, abandoning vaudeville, seized him under the arms and jumped him. The wild cry of infancy mourning for its ball soared with the infant, and came down without stopping.

Then the Reverend Mr. Roe put his nephew quickly on the lawn, almost with a thud, and fled into the house, through it, and to the kitchen, where a stout female busied herself with the preparation of food. He burst in upon her.

"The baby's crying!" exclaimed the Reverend Mr. Roe, coming directly to the point. "I can't stop him!"

"The pore little feller!" remarked the female, wiping her hands on her apron and glancing at the clock. "It's past his mealtime, and I guess he's hungry, Mr. Roe. I'll come with ye and get him."

She brushed past him, guided by the audibility of Henry William. She

picked up the baby and, with a look of open contempt at the Reverend Percy Roe, carried it out of sight toward the kitchen. Mr. Roe hesitated, but decided not to follow. Instead, he deviated to the bathroom, where he washed his face and hands, brushed his hair, and attempted with naphtha to remove a reminiscence of molasses candy from his outer garments. Then he went slowly, but with determination, to the telephone and learned that Miss Victoria Carter had gone away for a week's visit. But he got her address. His sister, coming home in time for luncheon, found him writing a letter.

"Baby asleep?" she asked. "I didn't see him in the perambulator."

Mr. Roe looked up from his letter.

"The last I saw of him," he said frankly, "he was being taken to the kitchen. Your cook seems an able person, and you were quite mistaken about her not liking children."

"The last one didn't," said Mrs. Martin. "And they all seem so much alike to me——"

"The child got hungry," explained her brother. "Attending to hunger is a cook's business——"

He resumed his letter as his sister hurried to the kitchen.

"My dear, dear Victoria!" So the Reverend Mr. Roe had commenced:

When a grown man finds he has made a foolish ass of himself, he can at least admit it. I have just had what I can only describe as a trying adventure. Oh, my dearest,

"The tongue of the wise uttereth knowledge aright,
But the mouth of fools poureth out folly."

I have been taking care of my sister's baby. I have been alone with him for some hours, as my sister is daily. I love him dearly, even at this moment. Yet I must confess that I was very, very tired; that I longed for what I have publicly called, a "hireling"; and that I sought one, even the cook in the kitchen, and gave the child into her keeping with a sense of relief and content that I find it difficult to put into words. I have been, in a way, a mother; and I see plainly, in the retrospect, that a natural and unavoidable weariness made me in the end incapable of discharging my duty with the evenness of temper that is due the child. It was, indeed, better for the child, and better for me, that we should be temporarily separated.

Some day I hope to express this truth, the desirability of a wise conservation of the mother's nervous poise, in a way that may somewhat counteract the sweeping and mistaken view of which I have been publicly guilty, and which, unable to recant in public, I am now recanting to you.

Oh, Victoria, be patient with me. I shall continue to be foolish. I cannot help it, for I am cursed with rhetoric. But I shall strive to be less so. I have been rolled about, even as a rubber ball in the hands of my nephew. I have been stuck up with molasses candy, but I am no longer stuck up with pride of intellect——

"Percy Roe," said Mrs. Martin, "are you coming to luncheon?"

The Reverend Mr. Roe looked at his unfinished letter. He stood up, hesitated, and then tore it into many small pieces.

"I'll be right there," he said. "And, by the way, Nanny, how far is it to the telegraph office? I want to send a telegram immediately after lunch."

And this telegram, although shorter, summed up the letter in exactly eight words:

VICTORIA CARTER: Have thought again no man is a mother.
PERCY.



"Let Me Dress You"

By Ruth Wright Kauffman

Author of "Make-Up," "The Return of Joshua Tucker," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. HAYGARTH LEONARD

Nobody needed beautifying more than Jane Vachelor. Read what happened to her when the great Pierre, exclusive dressmaker, undertook her case.

IF nothing succeeds like success, Pierre's dressmaking establishment was no fiasco. Monsieur Pierre hovered over the various rooms with proprietary tenderness, his white hands suggestingly folded, his little waxed mustaches alert, his eyebrows raised in quizzical examination of the ladies who came for his expert advice. Monsieur Pierre was an artist who never failed with a gown—or a bill; and his advertisement, appearing in the high-class papers and magazines, tempted more customers that he could, in the end, accommodate:

Be Lovely. Let Me Dress You. Pierre.

That was all. It avoided mention of bargains and French models; it gave no hint of the location of the shop; it lacked the blatant coaxing, in crude, bold type, of the larger and less discriminating houses. Pierre's advertisement did not require white space to set it off; every one looked for it as she would, after a holiday, seek first, among the stack of visiting cards, that of a dear friend.

"Madame," Pierre would gently explain to the good-natured, but abundantly formed, Mrs. Gorham, "it is not that you are—what should I?—wide?—but that gown—"

And Mrs. Gorham, a rejuvenating widow, would blush with schoolgirl sincerity and murmur:

"Hundred and fifty—Altmaker's custom department—"

To which, with a commiserating sigh, this genius would answer:

"I knew it! Who but Altmaker's? I would say nothing ill of a great firm — In its way—for the average woman, the shopgirl, the manicurist, the — But, I beg your pardon, for a lady distinguished, with genuine presence, with possibilities — Mrs. McGuire!"

His stolid assistant, a capable-looking person of a certain age and immobile features, would appear at his elbow, and, while he waved his hands—enigmatically to all save her—would pin and rip, ruthlessly take off the half of a sleeve or add a bit of lace and a velvet knot. Pierre, arranging the long glasses, would stand smiling a few yards back.

"There!" he would finally exclaim. "Those mirrors—so! Look now!"

He would slowly return to the lady, tilt her head by ever so little, tip her arms to another angle, and again retreat. With the slightest deprecatory shrug, he would continue:

"It is not I, but the mirrors that speak. Those lines—they are madame's. They are exquisite, ingratiating. We must follow the lines of nature—"

Mrs. McGuire would, perhaps, humbly touch one shoulder.

"Ah, that shoulder, madame!" Pierre would tap it. "Nature has been so kind to you, but here she just erred. A little aid— You see?"

Mrs. Gorham's possibilities required



"Ah, that shoulder, madame! Nature has been so kind to you, but here she just erred. A little aid— You see?"

long patience to realize. It was months before her full-blown beauty was evident to a cautious world, but the final result was one of the establishment's glories.

At Pierre's, the gold room on the first floor, the pastel room above, the Oriental room, and the electric room—the entire chain of galleries and halls equipped to bring out the best in each woman—had reached their capacity. If Pierre were to continue to give his undivided attention to each lady—that is, a brilliant moment of his undivided attention—his list must, indeed, be limited. Pierre's became a sort of club, membership to which meant letters to

all one's friends and a delay until some one went abroad or moved to California. Mrs. Ballantine Larch left Pierre with tears of vexation when her husband asked her to accompany him on his ambassadorial mission to Petrograd and she knew that her gowns would be frights until the cessation of diplomatic obligations. But Mrs. Larch's withdrawal at least made place for Jane Vachelor, and certainly nobody needed beautifying more than Jane.

She was a small woman, angular and sharp-featured, with a love for steam heat and log fires. She had been bred in a lap of nouveau-riche luxury, which she felt it her disagreeable duty to live up to. She was unimpulsive, sallow, morbid, and her best friends said she was snappish. No one would have acknowledged her existence, her parents

having left her for another world, had she not been the ward of Irving J. Boyce, senior. Doors opened to her downright figure and her downright speech more because of her reputed millions than because of the pleasure of her society. It was by force of an unexpected catastrophe that she finally made up her mind to join Monsieur Pierre's clientele.

She therefore received, one morning, on fine parchment, a handwritten letter to apprise her that because of Mrs. Ballantine Larch's regretted departure for Petrograd, Monsieur Pierre could invite Miss Vachelor to his establishment; and he took great pleasure in assuring

her that he would be glad personally to assume the grave responsibility of her clothes.

Monsieur Pierre stood for everything she now needed. For years she had held aloof from self-portrayal, except for the sarcasms that she vented on her acquaintances. Now she resolved to throw her truer self, so to speak, into the dressmaking arms of this man of genius. Forthwith she ordered her limousine and was whirled down Fifth Avenue to Pierre's.

But she came unheralded. It was not her habit to consider the etiquette of a mere shop, and she would have scorned making an appointment. The man in uniform at the door did not know her, and looked dubious; the blond person in the reception room was politely convinced that monsieur could see no one else to-day, although Jane made her gasp by showing her card; and the open registry of the proprietor's afternoon appointments dismissed the newcomer grandly.

Jane, a little red in the face, but beligerent, declared that she must and would see Monsieur Pierre. She was still fixed in her purpose when Mrs. McGuire, his first assistant, burst into the room, her mouth full of pins, her arms laden with gorgeous, soft stuffs.

Mrs. McGuire transferred her keen glance at the card to a keen, and not altogether approving, glance at Miss Vachelor.

"If it is only for a few moments," she said, "I think he might manage. I don't know— He always tries to oblige—"

"If you please," Jane insisted.

A quarter of an hour later, an obsequious errand boy led Miss Vachelor through the labyrinth of corridors and stairs to a gallery, at the far end of which Monsieur Pierre, picturesquely posed, sat looking at some photographs.

"Miss Vachelor!" announced the boy. Monsieur Pierre rose with dignified

alacrity, his hands pleasantly outstretched.

It was a rule with Miss Vachelor, despite her recent mercantile inheritances, not to let a shopkeeper touch her, and, after all, Pierre was only a sort of upper shopkeeper; but she felt her own hands rest for a moment on his, which could not with readiness be denied. She was glad his nails were clean and yet not highly polished. She was satisfied, too, after a slow scrutiny, that the man knew his business, even to the keeping of a confidence, if necessary.

"I was studying these photographs," Pierre explained as he led her back toward them. "You probably know Mrs. Gorham? It has taken several months to bring her clothes to this perfection. A long struggle!" He sighed. "But now we have at last permitted her to be photographed, and this is the remarkable result. Did you ever see anything more lovely? I bore you? You are not listening!"

Jane Vachelor was staring at the photographs.

"You did that with Florence Gorham? You could do that? I might have known she had had help!"

Pierre did not look at Miss Vachelor as he answered:

"You find her, then, so improved?"

"Mrs. Gorham, the charming and beautiful widow about to be wed at St. Bartholomew's to Mr. Burton Boyce, sole surviving son of the wealthy and philanthropic Irving J. Boyce," Miss Vachelor quoted ruminatively. Then she snapped: "I knew Florence Gorham when she was the ugliest child in New York City!"

Monsieur Pierre glanced up. His perusal of the photographs had not been purely unpremeditated; society gossip flies fast in dressmaking circles. Yet how could Burton Boyce, unless hard pressed—which was incredible—have let his eyes rest, even temporarily, on

this? The face and figure of Jane Vachelor seemed discouragingly beyond redemption. On the surface, they even lacked the desire for redemption.

"Indeed?" said he.

He was amazed by her next remark.

"Can you do as much for me?" she asked, in a businesslike tone.

Pierre coughed discreetly.

"One can do one's best, madame."

The gallery was empty; Jane Vachelor assured herself of that. Then, throwing self-repression to the winds, she turned impetuously to the great man. She had meant to state her case accurately enough—as one would describe disagreeable family entanglements to a lawyer—but without undue feeling; yet, just as her years of restraint had been unmitigated, so these moments of liberation unbarred long-locked gates. He looked so wise. Even had he not looked wise, she would nevertheless have confided in him. To her he seemed the last ray of hope—and she might lose even this chance.

"I want to be beautiful," she said, her poor, pale face actually aglow with eagerness. "It's all I care about. I *must* be beautiful! When I was little, they used to bring me down to show me to guests. Now look at me! It must be partly my clothes. *Something* is wrong. My features aren't bad; I'm only twenty-eight; I have always had money; I can go nearly anywhere. There isn't a man in the world who's ever proposed to me—that is, not *quite*. Oh, you know! Everybody does. Not that I want to be married, but—but I want some one to *want* to marry me!"

Monsieur Pierre was dumfounded. Used as he was to more or less intimate disclosures from capricious customers, he was not prepared for them before the second fitting—and they were usually the result of some sympathetic inquiry on his part.

She went on:

"And not for money—for me! I'm

still young enough. Oh, I saw how the *Tribune* last Sunday said Florence Gorham was one of New York's most beautiful women! But *you* did it. Why can't you do as much for me? If only somebody took enough interest to find out what's the matter! People call me intellectual because they can't think of anything else complimentary to say. I'm not intellectual. I don't want to be. I like poetry well enough—"The Lady of Shalot," and Swinburne and Ella Wheeler Wilcox—but I loathe bridge and concerts and oratorios. And that's all anybody thinks I'm fit for—*oratorios!* I want to be fascinating. I want people to look at me when I drive through the park—and not laugh. I want to be made love to—desperately——" She choked down a sob. "*I had* to see you to-day! I couldn't bear it any longer! Please don't think me silly. I'm sorry if I interrupted your appointments. But *they* don't need you the way I do. *Can* you do anything? *Can* you?"

She ended breathless, a pathetic figure standing meagerly before him. She was thin, narrow-chested, round-shouldered, decidedly flat-footed, her hair absurdly arranged under a hat that meant nothing, her face drawn into the compression of a censorious mouth.

The man was genuinely sorry for her. How *could* she be proposed to? Financial gain would be a sorry recompense for the infliction of this queer, sharp little creature, who might tarnish another's life like her own. Yet her momentary outburst had been as real as the tension that must be her ordinary existence. That outburst convinced him of her sincerity and gave him a solitary gleam of hope.

He sat down, unconscious that she stood, and looked at her solemnly, his head in his hands. His trouble over her was so earnest that it was an appreciable time before he recalled himself and rose to offer a chair.



He sat down, unconscious that she stood, and looked at her solemnly, his head in his hands.

"I will fetch my assistant," he then said.

"But I want *you*—just *you*! In six months you could— Ten thousand dollars—fifteen thousand—"

He stared without immediate comprehension. Why should she haggle? But he recaught his suave manner.

"Ah, yes," he said. "One moment please, madame."

The conversation that occurred in that one moment—which was more like half an hour—was heated.

"I tell you," said Mrs. McGuire at length, "it can't be done! I looked her over thoroughly downstairs, and she's just hopeless. If she had the best gowns the shop could create, she wouldn't know how to wear them. Besides, she's positively yellow."

"Can't she be taught?"

"With that face? We can't do everything. Mrs. Gorham was bad enough, but Mrs. Gorham could at least laugh.

You can dress anybody that knows how to laugh."

Pierre waited, tapping his foot.

"Nothing can be done," Mrs. McGuire went on with decision. "'Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute.' And another thing is sure—I won't help!"

"Very well," Pierre announced firmly, as he turned on his heel. "*I will.*"

Her eyes followed his lithe young figure in a sort of horrified perplexity. But as the door clicked behind him, she sank onto a fitting stool and laughed till the tears came. The laughter gave way to a whimsical smile, and she nodded her gray head. Mrs. McGuire was fifty years old if a day, but she had a charming smile.

That was how it happened that Pierre assumed the entire responsibility of Jane Vachelor. On his success with her, he would rest his own individual success. That was a secret he hugged

to himself. Mrs. McGuire might scoff, but he would go on. He would tear down all the restraints and errors of Jane Vachelor's make-up, strip her of her present personality—and start afresh.

He told her frankly that hers was a difficult case.

"But clothes? Won't clothes do it? Florence Gorham——"

"Madame requires clothes—and more."

"Is it money you want?" asked Miss Vachelor sharply.

"I would not undertake this for money."

"If money is not a dressmaker's object——"

"Madame," said the proprietor gravely, "I do not insult you when you tell me you are imperfect. Need you insult me?"

"I——"

"Exactly. That is one of the reasons why you do not fascinate like Mrs. Gorham. I cannot undertake the—shall I say, putting to rights?—unless you promise to be good-tempered. If you'd always be good-tempered, I believe I might succeed."

He looked so boyish and enthusiastic, and one so forgot his little waxed mustaches and the mannerisms of his eyes and hands, that impulse, to which Jane Vachelor had once before surrendered, recaptured her. The recent years to her were drab and her future black, if unassisted; the desire for faith in anybody seized hold of her and, with all the will in her small body, she resolved to follow Pierre's instructions. She would even wear tea gowns and negligees if he thought they could inspire beauty.

"I'll do whatever you tell me!" she promised rashly. "I'll put myself in your hands—for six months!"

He, however, refused at all to design gowns for her at once. To her ever-suspicious mind, his postponement at

first connoted a fear, but with the unswerving decision to treat herself objectively instead of subjectively for the six months, she pushed criticism from her, and his explanation had to be final.

"I don't know what you *are*, madame," he could repeat, as he considered her from every possible angle. "You have been too—too angry with yourself. You have been too sure of your homeliness. I think you may really be beautiful, but I must somehow find—yourself."

It was no flattery; his purpose was too sincere. Either she had beauty or she hadn't, but beauty here was no facile discovery. One scheme after another he tried, until she grew sullen, and his own interest flagged. The point was that he could not begin with the exterior until he had improved the interior. Only Mrs. McGuire's stinging comments kept him to his self-imposed pursuit, and they were sometimes so stinging as to make him wonder if they were not an intentional goad.

Monsieur Pierre's fashionable clientele, meanwhile, came and stayed and went, day by day. But Monsieur Pierre's mind was no more on débutantes and dowagers; this badly molded piece of clay that was Miss Jane Vachelor possessed his turbulent imaginations. *Was* it badly molded? Feature by feature, he studied her and found nothing strikingly unworthy. Yet something was wrong. She lacked light; she lacked——

He sent her to the best corsetières in the city—of course he got his commissions—and again and again to them. He ordered her to have one pair after another of shoes made and to consult a foot specialist about the flatness. He sent her to foreign coiffeurs with instructions to them not to return her until they recognized success. But success in the details brought no success in the entirety. She continued to hold her chest in and her shoulders out; she

stood as if she were tired of keeping herself erect; her face was colorless without rouge and speckled with it; her eyes blurred. Though she desired beauty with her whole heart, she altogether lacked that initiative which beauty entails.

From her former attitude of biting faultfinding, Jane Vachelor grew not sweet, but shy, with the dissection of her shortcomings. Huddled in her shapeless furs, only her lethargic eyes and sharp nose visible, always unaccompanied, she would dart in and out of the shop at the hours set by the great man. But the great man's two attempts at afternoon frocks met with no more praise than his first assistant's superior smiles and several hurt notes from other and more natively pleasing customers, who felt neglected. If only Mrs. McGuire would help! Yet it did seem as if any gown would of necessity lose personality the instant it were hung on Jane Vachelor. He could think of nothing but Jane Vachelor.

"First place," said Mrs. McGuire, after the third month of Pierre's trial, "she doesn't know how to walk. She gives a sort of hop, skip, and jump. Whatever did they teach her at school?"

Pierre was arching his mustaches. He wheeled.

"That's a good idea!" said he, and rushed to the telephone to summon her.

"Where did you go to school?" he brusquely demanded as soon as she, bewildered, reached him in the long gallery.

She dared not ask if he were crazy. Indeed, she hardly cared now; she was completely cowed. She told him the name of a school on the Hudson.

"But what did they teach you?"

"Why, everything, I suppose—reading, algebra, French, dancing——"

"Hold! Dancing! Do you dance well?"

She bit her lip.

"No," said she. "I don't dance."

"Why not?" He was almost brutal.

"Why—why—— I fell off a horse when I was learning to ride, and broke my leg. Something was the matter with the setting, and I couldn't walk for months. Oh, don't look at me that way! I had to learn how to walk all over again, and the girls laughed, I was so funny. It was awful for me somehow, and afterward I got my father to forbid me to be taught dancing. They said it was my fault the horse threw me. I suppose I did lose my head. I wanted so much to ride——"

"So you don't dance!" Monsieur Pierre tapped one foot meditatively. "And you had to learn again to walk." His inspiration came to life: "Would you still like to learn to ride?"

The mounting color was not unbecoming to her cheeks and neck.

"I'm so old!" she said. "I——"

"You can go West—Colorado or a ranch somewhere—if you don't want people to know. Dancing can come later. But for eight weeks you can ride and live a wholesome, outdoor life——"

"I hate outdoors!"

"I know. Eight weeks—that will bring you back just before the six months are up. You never even walk, do you?"

"Downstairs. Why should I?"

"To be beautiful. It may be the way."

She quibbled over the time it would take, but in the end she went. Not that she thought eight weeks could make her beautiful, but Monsieur Pierre, with the aid of a sympathetic ranch owner, a specialist, and a diet, so skillfully arranged her program that Jane, despairing of success, was nevertheless dogged in her determination to obey. Her faith wavered, but it was her only faith. If the North Star alone guides the lost mariner, none but Pierre could guide Jane.

She followed every direction. She

drank milk hopelessly and was bruised from head to foot from her first week's riding. She talked with men and women of a sort that she had not known existed. The life was so new to her that she had never guessed there was such a life—and she forgot her own kind. In eight weeks she knew she was another person.

As on her first visit to Pierre's, she sent no warning. This time she rushed there afoot. It was as if she had totally changed physiques. The doorman stared, but admitted her; the blond person inside barely withheld congratulations; the errand boy was sure that although monsieur was engaged with a most important experiment on a most important lady, whom Mrs. McGuire was at that moment draping like a statue, he would send down word that Miss Vachelor was to be seen at once. She was rosy-cheeked and bright-eyed. However abominably dressed, her face was full and seemed to have regained girlhood; her nose was less sharp; her arms were plump. If her shoulders were not yet perfectly straight, they were no longer noticeably defective, and her chest looked wider. Plainly she had been holding her head high and facing brisk, fresh air. Above all, her complexion was lovely, and she laughed when she put her little hands into those of her mentor.

Pierre looked at her as he might have regarded a miracle performed while he watched. He was beside himself with it all, and his large eyes sparkled excitedly. He himself fetched the olive-green broadcloth, the cream lace, and strips of beaver fur, and invoked a fitter—not Mrs. McGuire—whom he soon swept aside as clumsy and slow. Swiftly he slashed and draped and pinned, while Jane Vachelor stood before him talking, as fast as the words would come, of how she didn't learn to ride and then how she did, of the people she had met, of diets

and mountains and trees and rivers and birds.

The master went on pinning.

"And you did it all!" the young woman declared. "You! Why, I believe I was just unhealthy—nothing else in the world! Of course I can never be—" She twisted her head to look at the open-mouthed fitter and laughed as she continued: "But health is a lot. And I've *walked*! You can't believe how far I've walked!"

Rapid orders were all the time going on from proprietor to assistant, and scissors clipped and tore with no heed of waste.

"There!" said Pierre at last. "That is how your first real gown will look to-morrow. Miss Mamie, tell Mrs. Hutchins that this must be finished by to-morrow noon, no matter if every girl in the place works to-night until midnight. There'll be treble pay for each one put on the job, but it *must be done*!"

"But," objected Miss Mamie, "it can't be cut that way. It's impossible. Nobody could—"

"You see before you the finished garment—this is how it must look. The cutting and putting together make no difference to me. I'm after this effect. It's wonderful! I never believed—" With strong hands, he whirled mirrors about Jane Vachelor and compelled her admiration. "You may go, Miss Mamie. And, Miss Mamie," he called, as the young woman, with a scared face, edged out of the room, "tell Mrs. McGuire to come here in ten minutes. Not before! In—ten—minutes!"

They might have been left on a desert island.

"You've done everything for me!" said Jane, putting out her hand.

It was unpremeditated—he took her in his arms.

"Oh, those pins!" he exclaimed.

When he had her again a few feet from him, looking up at him with clear

eyes full of a devotion that they had never shown for any one else, he searched her face.

"Yes," he said slowly, "I've done it. And nobody else believed it could be done. And sometimes I didn't think so. Day after day and night after night, how we worked! And all that was the matter was that you thought you were a hothouse flower, while God must have made you to be a wild flower." There were honest tears in his dark eyes. "How beautiful you are! How truly beautiful!"

"Must I stand perfectly still?"

"I'm afraid you must, or the pins will come out. I wish—" He turned and tried to alter his tone to one less ardent. "Please try to forgive me for what I just did," he said. "I had no right, no matter how—"

"Why?" she asked, blushing.

"My dear young woman, you can't marry me."

"Are you married?"

"Heaven forbid!"

"If you married, would you marry for love or—what?"

"Don't you know?"

She gave a move, but he sternly waved her back.

"If I hadn't any money, what then?"

"Don't let's talk of it!" he groaned.

"Listen," Jane insisted. "I haven't. At least, I shan't have after next month. I've only had the interest, anyway. The



The master went on pinning. "And you did it all!" the young woman declared.

whole thing reverts to the Boyces after six months from the time I first came in here, and it can't be kept from the public much longer. That's why Burton— But what's the use? It's why I wanted to fix a sum. I thought you could do something quickly. Of course I meant to make some man marry me, but *me*, not Jane Vachelor's money. You knew that, didn't you? Oh, I am so ashamed! But if you don't want me—"

"I want you beyond anything else in the world and—damn the money!" he said.

Yet he stood motionless. His eyes burned her flushed face.

"Think of your social set—and mine," he said.

"My parents are dead. Nobody else

in what you please to call my social set cares—well, a whoop. If you mean *that* about the money, I mean it about *them*. What was my social set a generation ago? I felt lots more at home out there on the ranch. It was my own fault I never got on well with them, I suppose, but it's too late to be heart-broken about it."

He was still motionless.

"Do you," she went on daringly, "do you want me, then, so very much, Monsieur—Pierre?"

The great dressmaker looked strangely troubled.

"My dear," said he, taking her hand and holding it to his breast, "if you decide you are willing to let me love you, you will have a great deal to forgive. I mean"—confession was not easy—"I mean that when it once seemed prudent to take up this work, I became known as the brains of the place, because a man draws trade better than a woman—and especially a Frenchman. Don't you *see*? I'm almost entirely a fraud. I never think of it as a rule, but now, with your bright eyes there— Oh, my dear, don't you understand one big reason why I can't bear to give you up? Don't you know that with every one else I've only pretended, by understanding a lot of quick signs? This is the first gown I ever designed in my life—except those two failures I designed for you. But this is a wonderful gown! Now you know why my slashing about shocked the fitter."

Jane was gazing with wide eyes.

"Then you did this just for *me*? You've never, never dressed another

woman? You're not responsible for Florence Gorham? Oh, Pierre, I'm so glad!"

"I'm fake, too," he went on grimly. "This mustache"—he ripped it off—"my accent, which the ladies adore—all fake, all, all, all except my love for you!"

"That's real, isn't it?" she whispered.

"As real as my life!"

"I never did like your mustache."

"The brains of the establishment and the rightful head of it—I mean, Mrs. McGuire—is—"

Mrs. McGuire at that moment entered the room. Her shrewd eyes lighted on the gown at once with an approbation beyond concealment.

"Mrs. McGuire," said Jane, "Monsieur Pierre has just told me—in confidence, of course—that you are his partner. I feel I—we ought to tell you that we are going to be married—"

"Peter!" shrieked the partner, sinking to a chair and fanning herself with a piece of coat stiffening.

Jane stood helpless, but Monsieur Pierre went over to her and put his arm around her shoulder.

"Don't feel badly about it. It's true, true, true, mother dear!"

"Won't you please kiss me, when the pins are out?" asked Jane Vachelor of Mrs. McGuire. She was flushed with happiness. How could she ever be un-beautiful now, and what did any one in the world matter except this man? "I know you are a wonderful dressmaker," she went on, "but when I am married, I'm going to let only Pierre dress *me*."



"Getting Engaged," by Lee Foster Hartman, in the next number of SMITH'S, is a story worth waiting for. It is the liveliest, funniest story of an elopement that you ever read. And they weren't even engaged when they started! In fact, she had just refused him. If you like a love story, or breathless adventure, **DON'T MISS IT.**

The True Romance

By Genevieve Scott

ILLUSTRATED BY MAYO BUNKER

The first of a series of problem stories that will appear in succeeding numbers of SMITH'S. Many a girl will see herself in this "Ethelberta" heroine with her romantic ideas of love.

MY mother died when I was a little thing, and I was brought up by my Aunt Medwin. She had had an unhappy love affair in her youth—the old story, I believe, of pride and misunderstanding. The man she loved had in time married; but she had stayed true to him all her life.

I was always a romantic child. I lived far more in myths and fairy tales than in real life. Princes and princesses walked through my dreams. Much of my time was spent in conjuring up in my small brain pictures of myself in romantic rôles. Now I was a princess, loved by some gold-haired prince; now I was a queen, adored by some jealous courtier. Many a golden hour I spent having myself rescued by a hero of some superlative sort, who was forever ready to die for me.

This childish love of romance was healthy, I am sure; but when I was about fourteen, it passed over into a large love of romance of another kind—the romance of love.

I was very ready for this new ideal of romance. I had accumulated a good deal of data concerning it. I knew by heart the stories of Romeo and Juliet, Hero and Leandor, Paul and Virginia, of Rosamond, of Elaine, and a hundred more. I knew that true love was a thing apart, unchanging, unalterable. I knew that "the heart that has truly loved never forgets, but as truly loves on to the close."

At fourteen I read "Lucile", and began, the minute I had read the last of

it, to read it all over again; and I remember that for a long time I slept with it under my pillow.

My Aunt Medwin paid little attention to my reading. She read a great deal herself, and left me to live in a world very much my own. She read a great many paper-backed novels. When she had finished with them, she put them, supposedly out of my reach, in an old chest in the attic. There must have been forty or more of them, at least. There were some good ones among them, without doubt, but the majority of them, judged by my maturer judgment, were trashy enough—the ordinary overdrawn, overcolored, sensational love story. But to me they were meat and drink. I used to steal away and read them for hours at a time.

The heroines of these tales were, of course, almost without exception of a surpassing beauty. They had raven locks, or hair like spun gold; they were always able to swoon under great excitement; they wept easily, or not at all—"fearfully dry-eyed" some of them were, in receipt of news that must have broken their hearts. They "clung" and "started"; they "commanded" or "withered" with their "fine scorn"; they wore anguished or languishing looks; they thrilled or sobbed as need was; and some of them died of unrequited love.

They were unreal enough, certainly, and I never saw any one who ever really looked or behaved like them. But that only made them the more truly ro-



I loved them and admired them. It never entered my head that they were not true to life.

mantic. I loved them and admired them. It never entered my head that they were not true to life. They were real to me with all the reality lent them by my vivid imagination. That was just the harm of it, of course. They were morbid and unreal types, and certainly not very wholesome companions for a growing girl.

Some day, I told myself, I would live as they lived, and be loved as they were loved. There was one especially; her name was Ethelberta. She was beautiful and stately. She was all that I would have loved to be. She had a sad lot, to be sure; yet, after all, not altogether sad, for it was so intensely romantic. She went to her grave loving with a consuming passion a man who had once loved her, and who had then been false enough to love some one else. She led all the rest; she was my beau ideal. When love came to me, it should come as it came to Ethelberta, and as she had been true, so would I.

I intended to have a "grand passion" myself, not a mere everyday love affair. Long before the occasion dreamed of offering itself, I was ready to die for love.

The year I was eighteen, two boys—they seem boys to me now, though I then credited them with being men—offered me their undying devotion.

I liked the sensation of being loved, yet I repulsed their offers with a good deal of haughtiness. They blushed and stammered, poor things, and were overcome by their feelings; and you may be sure I had no intention of accepting *that* sort of thing as love! I remembered the fiery hero of Ethelberta. I remembered how bold and masterful he had been; how he had taken her by storm; how he had seized her white wrists, and drawn her toward him. I remembered, too, how, after that, she trembled when she heard so much as his footstep. When love came to me, it must be presented in some such fashion.

And what if it never came? Well, I told myself, better to go down to my grave unsatisfied—oh, yes, ever so much better—than to accept any compromise with my ideals. Ethelberta and all the other ladies of love and I were agreed as to that.

II.

When I was nineteen, love came to me, and in such a fashion as I approved. It sounds simple enough to say that love came to me, but to me it meant that the whole world was changed and made new. Roland—I was thankful for his romantic name—fell in love with me at first sight, quite as Romeo did with Juliet; and the very first time I saw him, I loved him.

There was something daring and gallant about him. He took me by storm, as it were. He immediately proceeded to set me up on a throne, whether or no, apart from all others. He wrote love verses to me that would have done credit to Ethelberta's hero, and he swore eternal devotion. Sun, moon, and stars might decay, and the end of the world come, before his feeling for me would alter.

But I had no idea of being won easily. Ethelberta, with her pride, her lofty carriage, her lovely outward coolness, and her stately skepticism toward the man she inwardly adored, was my model and my best friend. She was real to me, though she lived only in a book, and a very trashy book at that. I think I unconsciously consulted her a hundred times a day; and my actions and opinions took their color direct from her.

I remembered the scene in which she had quoted to her dark-haired hero, to test him—yes, even while her heart was burning with love for him, and the mere nearness to him made her faint with happiness:

"Ah, Rochester, Rochester"—he had a romantic name, too, you see—"men

have died, and worms have eaten them, but not for love—not for love!”

And, in answer to that, he had poured out a very torrent of hot protestations and avowals; had grown fierce, fairly, under her doubt of him. It was then that he had seized her wrists and drawn her to him.

It was a powerful scene, I thought. It had needed just that touch of her doubt to open the floodgates of his affection. So, at Ethelberta's direct suggestion, I am sure, I kept my love well hidden from Roland. Some day I would give him the great gift of it—some day he should know how deeply, how utterly, I loved him—but not just yet.

I had long known, ever since I had known Ethelberta, that when love came, he would be lord of me, that my love, once given, was given until the Judgment Day—"till the sun grows cold, and the stars are old, and the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold."

I underwent all the exquisite, poignant psychology of love. Every moment of life was dear to me because of him. The little town in which he lived, the portfolio in which he carried his law papers, the dawns and sunsets and the blossoming star gardens of the night, the heavens and the earth and sea, were mine because of him. It was enough that he looked at the heavens, that he slept under the color and the beauty of the dawn, that he listened idly to the sound of the sea; a new joy was lent these things for me. A wholly new glory was in life because the thought of him pervaded it. I realize better than any one, it seems to me, that these words are feeble to express that radiance and glory, that evanescent and unreturning beauty, of first love. There are no words—none—adequate to express it.

I held all this in my heart, but I had revealed none of it yet to Roland. Some day I would tell him, yield to

him, be overcome by his love, some glorious, wonderful day—oh, the beauty and romance of it!—some crowning day of all. I would let him tell me as passionately as he chose of his undying love. I would seem to doubt him, and he would tell me more—would show me fiercely how much he loved me; and then—suddenly, in a moment's time—I would let him see the whole wonderful truth.

But the time was not ripe yet; circumstance must test his love for me, and the proper amount of doubt and resistance on my part. I remembered Ethelberta, and all the ideals she had taught me. I must not be too easily won.

One day I was near to the great moment. Roland was leaving town to make his way in a great city. Should I let him know before he left, or should I not?

We were down by the river. The moon silvered it. At the other side, the meadows stretched away gray and dreamy and misty, and a whippoorwill called somewhere in a copse by the shallows.

I can't remember now all his words, but they were hot and impetuous. He was going away—would I not say that I loved him? He was ready to lay his soul down for me to put my feet upon—if so I might go unhurt through the world.

My heart was knocking hard with the mere thrill and joy of his presence. Oh, I knew—I knew, indeed, the passion that writers tell about! I knew Ethelberta's love—I understood her every emotion. But, like her—yearning with love as I was—my head was still high and proud and haughty. Let other women be easily won, but when one has such a love to give as Ethelberta and I had—it should not be won too easily. This was the moment I had dreamed of—the beauty of the place; Roland, with his handsome and beau-

tiful face lit up with love for me; the hot words; the pleading tone!

I ought to be ashamed, I know, to tell what follows. But I have promised myself to tell this story exactly as it occurred.

For a moment I was gloriously happy in his love for me; I wanted to tell him that I loved him as much as he loved me and more. But love must not be accepted in this unromantic fashion; it must be proved, tested, denied, doubted, flaunted a little, the way they do in books!

Roland was waiting, impatient and fervid.

"Don't you believe me?" he asked passionately.

I was splitting a piece of ribbon grass with care. I waited until I had finished it—then I threw it aside and turned my eyes as Ethelberta herself might have done to his, so eager, so burning.



And then, in Ethelberta's very manner, I quoted her: "Oh, Roland, Roland, my dear, 'men have died, and worms have eaten them, but not for love.'"

"Am I to believe all this just because, under the spell of this heavenly moonlight, you choose to say it to me?" And then, in Ethelberta's very manner, I quoted her: "Oh, Roland, Roland, my dear, 'men have died, and worms have eaten them, but not for love.'"

But where were his fierce hands on my wrists? There was silence. He did not take my words as Rochester

had taken Ethelberta's. I remember how, all in a moment's time, it seemed that the glory had died out of the night.

Roland took my words in earnest, as I had not meant them. To him they spoke a genuine doubt of his love.

He sat for what seemed a long time, looking moodily out over the river. When he spoke, his voice had something dull and constrained in it.

"Do you know," he said at last, "I think you are hard on a fellow? I don't mean your not loving me—not that. I know I'm not very lovable, maybe. But your doubt——"

Oh, if I could have told him! If I could have made him understand how I cared for him! But to do that would have been to humble myself, and to bring a great moment down to a pitiful human confession that I had been only acting a romantic part. My real self was there, ready to be honest and true and frank and humble, also; but back of it stood not only Ethelberta, but every other gold-haired or raven-tressed unreal heroine I had ever read of in those old paper-backed novels in the attic. How could I be my true self with them all about me? I had lived so long with them, and so devotedly,

that unconsciously they directed my comings and goings and my ways and manner of thinking. How could I speak, with their voices in my ears? They never showed feeling when they felt most—no, not by the quiver of an eyelid. In the presence of the man she loved, Ethelberta, as well as the rest, deported herself like a queen. This romantic and royal manner could be had only at a price, it seemed, but the true romance of life was worth it.

"Let us talk no more of this to-night," I said, with a kind of gentle condescension. "Some day"—yes, I actually said this as a further test of his love!—"some day you will be coming to me, your old friend, to tell me of a greater love than this—for some other woman."

I spoke these as I had spoken the other words, with a foolish longing to rouse him to a more passionate declaration.



I watched the whole night out, a night of dumb suffering and torment.

But they did nothing of the sort. I was behaving like a heroine in a book, and might continue so to behave if I chose; but Roland was deporting himself like the fine, earnest fellow he was, hurt and a little amazed by my attitude toward this situation, which meant so much to him. He was silent and moody.

We walked across the field together, I absolutely wretched, but perfectly self-possessed, with my head high like Ethelberta's, and pretending to be quite at my ease. My heart beat miserably. I could not have analyzed my feelings. I might as well have been under some fairy enchantment, so little was I able to be my true self, so much was I guided by the white, romantic hands of Ethelberta and all the rest of the heroines who stood to me in place of the real—the beloved heroines of my world of romance.

III.

We hear every day of young lovers separated by the disapproval of parents, or the rancor of jealous hearts, or by cruel circumstance. But there are young lovers—many more, I believe—separated as Roland and I were separated, by false ideas which are fostered by cheap drama, cheap literature, false romance, and the ignorance of youth.

Roland went to a great city and faced facts as most young fellows must and should face them; whereas I stayed there in a small town, clinging to my prejudices, without so much as knowing them for prejudices. Roland was looking at life with clear eyes; I was turning my head away from life, and fixing my eyes on romance.

I loved Roland now more than I had ever done, and I told myself that my love for him was deeper than his ever could be for me. I told myself that if he had really cared for me, he would have stood the test to which I had put him. My doubt of him would only

have called out his more passionate assertions. Yet in my heart I believed that he would some day love me as deeply as I required. Meantime, it was my part to love on to the end of time. Roland was the love of my life. The only thing it seemed to me I could not endure was to be robbed of the right to love him.

Months passed. We wrote to each other, but Roland made no reference to the evening by the river. There were a hundred times when I might have written out my heart frankly, but I did not. Something stopped me. What? I know well enough it was the old, deep-rooted love of romance. I wanted to be loved in this or that romantic and intense fashion, and finding myself not so loved, I flung myself into a kind of romantic sorrow of attachment.

One day he came back. It was only for a day and a night. We walked down to the river and sat in the old lovely place under the great elm. The moonlight was there, and a whippoorwill called from the copse, exactly as it had upon the other night. Again the stage was set with that lovely scenery so exactly to my approval. There was a little constraint and embarrassment about his manner, but I was at my ease. This was life as it should be.

He talked of his work and of his life in a great city, and all the while my eyes rested hungrily on every line and feature and loveliness of his strong and sensitive face. Oh, how good, how good it was to have him back! Not merely in dreams, but there in the flesh, and so that I could have put my hand out and touched him. Again it seemed as if the heavens and earth were mine.

Yet we talked on of the usual commonplace things. No one, from our conversation, would have guessed how my heart was singing within me. But I knew these for the usual behaviors of love. It is possible, customary even, to speak lightly of unimportant things

when all the while the soul is quivering with joy and emotion. Ethelberta and the rest had told me that much.

"There's something I want to tell you, besides," he said at last.

And then he told me.

"I would have told you before, but, you see, I wasn't sure that she cared. But she does. I used to dream— Oh, well, you know the other dream I had. But you made me understand that it couldn't be. I can see now that you were right. You are always so way ahead of me spiritually."

So he stumbled on, telling me piece-meal.

He had met her, it seemed, two months before.

I showed no hurt, of course, though I think I felt like some animal that has received a mortal wound.

We sat by the river, and he told me more about her, and I listened. The lovely, moonlit night passed on slowly, but I did not notice it. In my inmost spirit there was a deep night without a star.

As we walked back across the fields, he still talked about her, and of how much she cared for him, though he was not worthy he said, so much as to tie her shoe latches.

Once he stopped and looked down at me.

"I think," he said, "when people are happy like this, they just naturally want every one else to be as happy as they are. I know you have never cared like that for any one, but I wish it would

come to you, too. I'd like you to find the same happiness that I have in life."

The moonlight fell on his clear and beautiful face, the face that in all the world made my joy and my sorrow.

A few moments more, and he was bidding me good night and walking away from me down the path.

That night I knelt by my window, with the full moonlight streaming over me, and drank to the very bottom, it seemed to me, the cup of bitterness; for I thought there could be no bitterer sorrow than to love one man wholly and to know that his love belongs to another.

Ethelberta and the other heroines were there beside me to instruct me, I suppose; but, oh, I did not care to listen to them that night! Ethelberta had won her love by the very same methods by which I had lost mine. I turned away from the thought of her.

If only I had not listened to her and the rest! If I had been content with less! If only I had not demanded so much romance of love! I knew now that I had made an idol of romance.

I went to the desk and got the package of Roland's letters. I put them on the floor beside me, and kept my hand on them. I watched the whole night out, a night of dumb suffering and torment. For years after, I could hardly endure to see the full moon shining on the fields, and I have grown sick at the call of a whippoorwill.

But this was not the end of the story. There was more to come.

Read the end of the story in the next number of SMITH'S.



The Watchdog

By Winona Godfrey

Author of "Mutiny," "The Moment," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY J. HENRY

If it had been any one but Peter, the safe and invulnerable, whom Dick Eynesford chose for his mission, the surprising thing would never have happened.

MR. PETER RADFORD JULIAN entered the door bearing the imprint "Estate of Susan Eynesford," to be instantly and respectfully waited upon by the office boy. This will give you an idea of Peter's distinguished presence.

"Tell Mr. Eynesford that Mr. Julian is here."

In a moment he was ushered in to Mr. Richard Eynesford.

"Well, you came right over, didn't you? Good boy! Sit down, Peter, sit down."

Peter sat down.

"You sent for me as if it were a very important matter. What's up?"

Dick, a handsome, volatile young man, eyed him merrily. He had been brought up by an estate instead of by a family, and it had fallen upon Peter, who was seven or eight years older, to get him out of all sorts of scrapes, and to act as peacemaker when outraged "trustees" postponed forgiveness.

"Well, it's like this," Dick began, with a droll air. "Aunt Felicia Dandridge has had another of her 'spells'. She has to leave that cool million of hers to *somebody*, and it might as well be *me*. You know I can't get a penny out of this whole estate above my allowance—which is downright niggardly—without getting up a petition to about a dozen hard-headed old boys who never see things my way. You know I can't touch the thing myself until I'm

forty. I wonder how grandmother could tell, when I was two, that I couldn't be trusted with money. Aunt Felicia's million would be my very own, with no strings on it, and I confess I have designs. Now, I've been kind of neglecting the old lady lately in favor of—ah—another lady——"

"Some other ladies," corrected Peter.

"No—'pon honor, *one* lady. And the *old* lady is a little huffed at me. I've a hunch that if I go gallivanting off up the country for the next two weeks, some school for the defective-minded, or a cat cemetery, or the heathen, will cut me out."

"What's the importance of this particular gallivanting, that you need consider it?" inquired Peter.

"It's most confoundingly important. That's the deuce of it! Look here, Peter, it's like this: Kitty—Kitty Eversson——"

"Yes."

"Kitty's giving a house party up at her new place. Not a big party; about a half dozen of us—Grace Coleman and Herbert Bostwick and Will Jessup and myself and—Mrs. Antrim. Mrs. Antrim is the one lady."

"Ah!" said Peter.

"Exactly. The only woman, I assure you, Peter, that I ever wished to bestow the name of Eynesford on."

"Ah?" said Peter.

"Don't 'ah' me in that tone, you old fish! The others were just—— Hang

it, every fellow gets to know a lot of girls. But this is the point: Jessup thinks *he* would like to change her name to Jessup. Now, Will's a charming fellow, you know, and all that, and we've been running neck and neck, as you might say. And she—well, if she gives me her hand, she smiles at Will; and if she rides with Will, I get an extra dance; and if she walks in the park with me, she has tea with Will——”

“Very interesting,” observed Peter politely, stifling a yawn.

“Exciting as the dickens!” declared Dick. “Now, don't you see the box I'm in? If I don't go to Kitty's, Will's going to have a free field for two whole weeks! Honest, I think she's just at the point where some little thing like that is going to decide her.”

“Must be a passionate attachment on her part,” Peter commented.

Dick's face fell.

“Oh, you couldn't expect that with her. All you could hope would be that she'd let you love *her*.”

“Still so devoted to the late Antrim?”

“No—not that. It seems she thought she was in love with him, and he made her dreadfully unhappy. So she's sort of sworn off on love. It's a ‘you-love-her-at-your-own-risk’ kind of business with her. But she's not got much money, and she doesn't want to go on the stage or open a tea shop or do æsthetic dancing, so you see there's a chance of persuading her to be Mrs. Eynesford——”

“Or Mrs. Jessup,” said Peter.

“I don't like that combination of words. Now, Peter, good old boy, here's where you come in.”

Peter dodged hastily.

“I don't see any place that looks like an entrance for me.”

“Oh, now, don't crawfish! Why, I know a dozen men who'd give their eye-teeth for this chance!”

“Why not give it to them, then?”

“Not much! I want somebody I can trust. What's the good of trying to keep off the wolves with a sheep-eating dog!”

“Thank you.” Peter laughed, sobering, however, as his glance fell to his own left hand. There was a ring there that stood for this faith in his immunity. It was the one thing that pre-eminently marked Peter as different from other men—this curious fidelity to the lost love of long ago.

Ever since that tragedy, Peter had borne the reputation of being absolutely immune to all feminine charms. If a man was called out of town on a particular night of ball or dinner, he went serenely if Peter would escort his fiancée. If anybody's wife was marooned anywhere with Peter, that anybody made no fuss whatever. Who was with her? Peter Julian. Oh, *Peter*, said Mrs. Grundy, and gave the affair not a second thought. For Peter, said everybody, was perfectly safe. And no woman hater, either—just kind and gentle with them all. If your sister quarreled with her very best, she was quite as willing—or more so—to weep on Peter's shoulder as your own. If a woman had a horrid bridge debt that she was afraid to mention to her husband, she borrowed the money from Peter, who never asked so much as a kiss by way of interest. Not only in these little matters was Peter safe, but dashing widow and artless débutante and designing maid had cast themselves in vain against the rock of Peter's kind indifference. They agreed in open conclave and secret chagrin that Peter was really invulnerable. Compared to Peter, Joseph was an amorist and a philanderer.

“Now, what I want you to do,” Dick proceeded to explain, “is to take *my* place at Kitty's. Your duty will be to attach yourself to Mrs. Antrim; thereby preventing the charming William from getting in a word edgewise.

Don't you see? Grace Coleman is angling for Will, and I want you to pair yourself off with Vivian——"

"Vivian?"

"That's Mrs. Antrim—so that Will always falls to Grace. See?"

"That *sounds* very simple," Peter protested, "but it's likely to turn out a highly complicated job. The lady may fancy managing the thing herself. She

the lady doesn't snub me too persistently."

Thus Peter, highly amused, laden with instructions and parting admonitions from Dick, carrying in his pocket for his own reassurance Mrs. Ever-son's cordial invitation, in due course found himself at that lady's latest domicile.

Peter stared at the ring.
It had not left his
finger for years.



may prefer Jessup's society to mine, and proceed accordingly."

"That's exactly what you're there to prevent, Peter, my boy." Young Mr. Eynesford looked most serious. "Be a good fellow and help me out—and help Grace out. It isn't half as absurd as it sounds."

"Oh, of course, I'll go," Peter consented, "though I rather doubt the efficacy of your little plan. But I'll do my best to play watchdog for you if

While he dressed for dinner, Peter's thoughts were naturally concerned with his frivolous mission and—Vivian Antrim. He thought of her rather curiously and with somewhat amused anticipation. Since it was simply a toss-up with her, Dick was a good fellow and would make her a capital husband. Why, then, not help it along—to oblige a friend?

His meeting with the to-be-guarded lady was conventional.



Then he kissed her on the mouth with ardor and precision.

Said Kitty: "Mrs. Antrim—Mr. Julian. Vivian, behold Peter! Peter, you've kept us starving. Come, children, let us dine—let us dine!"

Peter was paired as per schedule with Dick's beloved, and he was able fully to approve that gentleman's taste. Mrs. Antrim was one of the few women who wear their beauty as really well-dressed women wear their clothes—simply, naturally, and without self-consciousness. That beauty was always carefully framed, but she never had the air of inquiring how you liked it. She smiled often, but did not laugh overmuch. So many women seem obsessed by the notion that to be charming is to toil at a perpetual vivacity.

Kitty's house party was not one of

those lugubrious affairs that immediately reduce themselves to sequestered couples, leaving the hostess yawning in her own boudoir, unless she has thoughtfully provided herself with a cavalier. This simplified Peter's watchdog job. By merely looking out a little, he could be always sitting or riding or playing near Mrs. Antrim when "that charming fellow," Jessup, appeared in the offing. After a few days, the latter became a trifle huffed, and rather ostentatiously attached himself—as per schedule—to Grace Coleman.

Peter would not have retained his post long, though, if Vivian had administered the shade of a snub—for if

a woman wishes to favor a man, she can contrive a thousand ways to do it, and no watchdog ever invented can stop her; if she had given Peter the slip by whipping up her horse when he turned in beside her, if she had said she was too tired to dance when he inserted himself before the maneuvering Jessup. Peter was not poor, but he was proud. He would very quickly have conceded that the lady knew her own mind, and a situation as watchdog would have been vacant.

But Vivian did none of these things.

Now, two weeks is not a long time, and it seemed to Peter that the passing of this particular two weeks positively exceeded the speed limit. The last night of Kitty's party inevitably arrived. At dinner, Will Jessup rose smilingly to announce:

"Er—friends, with Grace's permission, I am—announcing our engagement."

Afterward, Vivian slipped out upon the veranda, and Peter—like steel after magnet—followed.

Vivian lay back rather pensively in a deep porch chair. Peter did not suspect that the pensiveness might be due to Will's announcement. He thought it probably just a mirage of his own glumness.

He drew a long breath.

"Well, to-morrow it will be all over."

"What will?" she asked lazily.

"This two weeks of Arcady," said Peter simply.

"Arcady? That means you have enjoyed it?"

"Thoroughly. Haven't you?"

"Yes." Her tone held no special enthusiasm.

The maize of her gown seemed compact of the very moonlight itself, the scarf about her bare shoulders to veil the creamy marble of a perfect statue. Her brown hair was dark against the willow chair, and her eyes were murky

and mysterious as a forest pool at midnight. Peter looked—and looked.

At last she glanced up, smiling.

"So Will and Grace have made up their minds."

"Were you surprised?" Peter asked.

"Oh, no. You know they were engaged last year and broke it off."

"I didn't know it. I understood"—Peter cleared his throat—"that Will was interested in another direction."

"You mean me?" frankly.

"Why—yes."

"Oh, Will's a bit of a philanderer. You can see it wasn't very serious."

"Grace is a nice girl," said Peter, "but to me it seems a long drop to Grace from—you."

"You overwhelm me, Mr. Julian." She laughed a little, softly.

The sound of his own words had amazed Peter himself. He choked back some still more amazing phrases that surged to his lips, and sat silent in a sort of consternation of self-revelation. His hand gripped the arm of his chair, and the moonlight glinted from the ring on his third finger. It caught Vivian's eye, too.

"What an odd ring you wear!" she observed, quite casually. "May I see it?" She held out a slender hand.

Peter stared at the ring. It had not left his finger for years, and its removal seemed now to take on a symbolism far beyond the sentiment that had placed and kept it there. He changed color, stammered something, got to his feet, the fingers of his right hand on the ring, whether to guard it or remove it was not clear.

Mrs. Antrim, seemingly unaware of his agitation, rose, too, with slow grace, her hand still extended as if she thought his movement was merely to give her a better view. They stood so for a second; then she looked up to see why—

Peter's arms closed around her, his lips brushed her hair, his cheek pressed hers. Then he kissed her on the mouth

—with ardor and precision. And then, without having said a word, he as suddenly released her and left her.

Half an hour later, he was tramping along the moonlit road to Wildemar, where a train for the city could be flagged at two a. m. He had left a note for Kitty, saying that he had been recalled by telephone to town, his presence being urgently required on some important business the first thing in the morning.

Dick greeted him effusively.

"Peter, old boy! How are you? Didn't look for you till afternoon. Here to report? What's the good news?"

Peter sat down. His left hand, resting on the top of his stick, was ringless.

"The best, I fancy," he returned evenly. "Grace is engaged to Jessup."

"You Peter, you! You turned the trick, old watchdog! And now the coast is clear for yours truly! Isn't she the winner, Peter? The peach, the darling!"

Peter squirmed.

"Can't you indorse my judgment, Peter? You shall be best man! Best friend a fellow ever had! Shake!"

They shook hands.

Peter got away as soon as he could, with Dick's final exultation in his ears.

"I shall call this evening and see what the lady has to say to me!"

Insufferable, conceited little popinjay! Why he had ever bothered with him was a mystery to Peter.

Of all dreary days, this was the longest and the dreariest; and when night at last came, it was only to inflict a thousand new tortures. Theater after theater Peter invaded in the hope of surcease from visions of the way Dick was spending his evening. Fifteen minutes was about the limit for any one play; in his whole not-brief experience with the drama, Peter never had

seen such a procession of tiresome, witless, intolerable rot!

By eleven o'clock he was home again—to be greeted by the spectacle of Dick Eynesford slumped down in a chair, his usually sleek hair tousled, his dress-shirt front bulging like a pigeon's breast. He lifted a gloomy and accusing gaze to Peter's astonished face.

"Look here, Peter," he immediately began, on a peevish note. "You must have made a lovely mess of it down there at Kitty's!"

"In what way?" Peter inquired quietly.

"In what way?" repeated his caller. "How do I know? That's what I came to find out. What did you tell her about me, anyway?"

"Nothing whatever that she didn't know."

"Didn't let anything slip about Dolly Defoe or—any of those girls?"

"No. Of course not. What's this about, anyway?"

"Well, I went out there to-night, as I said I would. Naturally, I expected her to be as sweet as ever—"

"Wasn't she sweet?"

"Oh, sweet as a nesselrode pudding, and about as cool! I couldn't make her out. So I thought it would be a hit with her if I told her how I'd sent you down there to keep Will off. Darn the women! You never can tell how they're going to take a thing! Always just opposite from the way you had it doped out!"

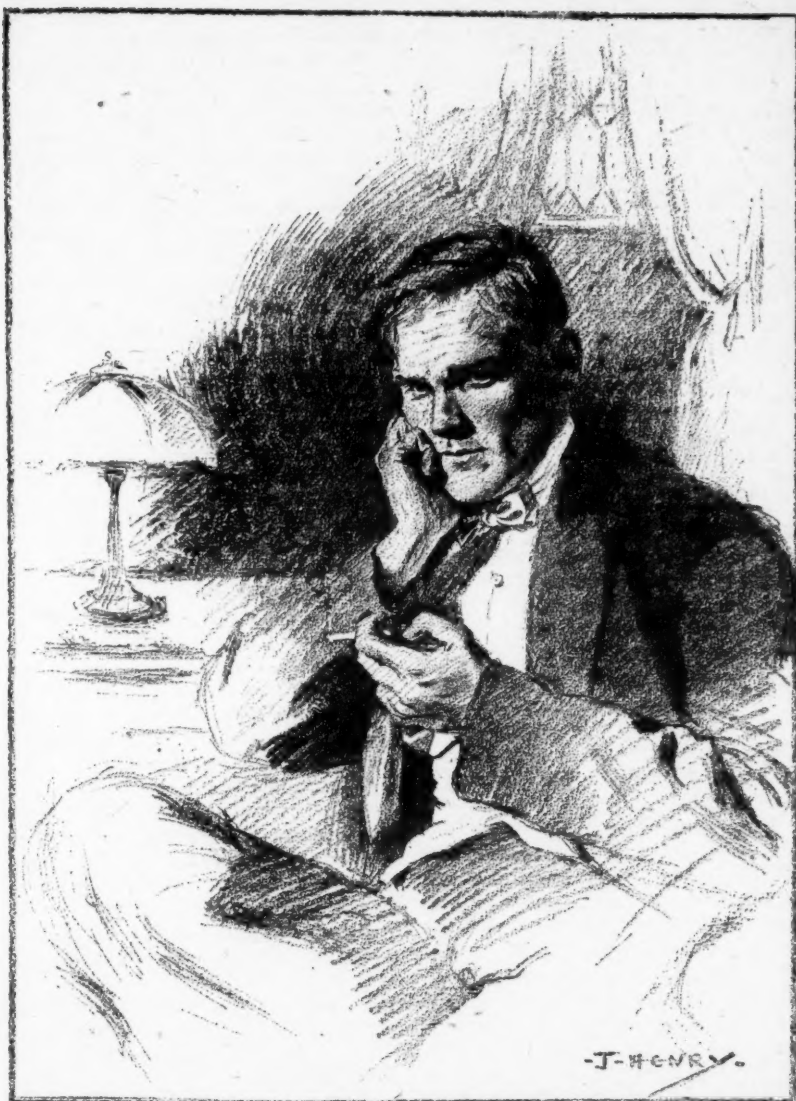
"It wasn't a hit, then?"

"Not what you'd notice! 'Oh, indeed?' says she. 'So that was it, was it? That was why your big friend was always at my heels! Say, look here, Peter, I don't fancy you were much of a hit, either.'"

"I was aware of that." Peter accepted the fact gloomily.

"Well, you needn't have queered me, too," Dick complained grouchy.

"If you're queered," Peter flared,



He lifted a gloomy and accusing gaze at Peter's astonished face.

"you did it yourself! The whole fool business was your idea! I shouldn't have gone on with it. But, aside from the silliness of the thing itself, I don't see why Mrs. Antrim should be offended with you."

The crestfallen Richard did not detect a faint stress on the "you".

"Well," he sighed, "no use getting sore about it. I suppose it wasn't your fault. I just wanted to see if you could guess what had happened. I'll be going now."

He shook hands and made a doleful exit.

Peter threw himself into the chair Dick had quitted. Vivian's displeasure was no mystery to him, but he did not think that she would persist in visiting it on Dick. It was a silly business, but not unforgivable. It was Peter himself who had mortally offended.

The next morning he presented himself at the injured lady's door. He felt that he owed her an apology, and he had come to offer it. He also felt that perhaps he should make an effort to smooth Dick's path a little. Not that the idea of a smooth path for Dick afforded Peter any poignant bliss. Some doubts as to being received at all were laid by his admission to her cozy little parlor, and Vivian did not keep him waiting.

"Good morning, Mr. Julian."

Her manner was courteously gracious; not much more. She did not offer him her hand. She did not let him see her eyes.

"I have come," said Peter, "to—beg your pardon." Sometimes the best way to make a bad matter worse is to ask pardon for it. "I am afraid," continued truthful Peter, "that I can't say I am sorry it happened, but I can very sincerely ask you to forgive me."

"Oh, I forgive you." Vivian displayed all the coolness and sweetness and indifference of that same nesselrode pudding.

"Thank you." She was not at all helpful with the conversation. "Dick"—Peter changed his position nervously—"Dick seems to think that you are offended with him."

"You have seen him already this morning?" she asked quickly.

"He came to see me last night."

"To complain of my treatment of him?" She seemed amused.

"To see if I could throw any light on—what he thought your changed attitude."

"And could you?" She even laughed a little here.

"No," he hesitated. "Unless that silly scheme did not amuse you."

"It did not amuse me!" she retorted.

"It was so exactly of a piece with his general conceit!"

Peter's jaw fairly dropped.

"Kitty brought him here, in the first place," she went on, with spirit. "I liked him well enough, let him come when I liked, went out with him when I wished, exactly as I did with Will Jessup or any other man friend. Nothing but his assurance could have made him think that I felt anything more for him than complete indifference!"

"I am surprised," murmured Peter.

"He seemed to be, too." She adjusted a hairpin. "The subject bores me. Let's talk of something else."

"Let us. You spoke the other night about—my ring." Peter's voice had a new tone. "Had you heard—had Kitty told you—why I wore it?"

"Yes." There was a shade of defiance in the monosyllable.

"I am beginning," Peter continued, "to dare to hope that you wished to see if you could make me take it off."

"You are absurd!" She still did not flinch, but her color was deepening.

"Probably," he admitted. He put out his hand; the ring was gone. "You succeeded, Vivian. I am in love, with a man's love, for the first time. Will you marry me?"

"Yes, Peter," Mrs. Antrim whispered.

And the radiant Peter never suspected that he had been wooed and won, instead of wooing and winning!

Trouble

By Mary Patterson

Author of "Another Queer Thing About Parents," "Why I Like an Exciting Town," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HAROLD THOMAS DENISON

That naïve and very real child, Anne, begins her new diary.

NOVEMBER 10th. I lost my dairy once, and father said why Anne, why don't you write any more in your diary and mother gave him an awful look and I knew there was a secret. I know the secret. They have read my dairy when I trusted their honor without locking my desk.



The way parents can do and then talk to their children about not doing the same thing! It is scan—scandalous!! But father gave me another diary on my birthday and mother gave me a lovely blue feather pen and some ink, for a hint, I suppose. Anyway, I can write now, without much worry about *them*, for they don't care what I do. I can even trust their honor if I can't find the key to my desk. Because there is trouble here. The very first we ever had, and I certainly hope the very last.

It all began at dinner one night when father and mother were talking the mystery way. Mother talks it much better than father because he would always tell right out if she did not stop him with an awful look. But that night mother began without saying excuse me to me or anything, she said to father no word yet? And father said no but there is nothing to worry about.

I just ate my soup and drew my spoon *towards* me to see if they would notice, but they never. They were just saying little things of one kind and another until salad and then they got the word. Or words. Ten of them. It was a telegram from Trixy's father if you will believe it and it said Proud father of a splendid son. Emily and baby fine. Now what do you think of that. I let a piece of tomato slip off my fork and sat back in my chair. I thought mother was going to cry but father danced around the table and kissed her, and no one even looked at me. Then I said what's the trouble and they got very effectionate all at once, and mother said o darling, darling we've just heard that Trixy has a little baby brother isn't it too beautiful, and father said sweetheart don't you wish you could have one too?

There it was again. Always wanting me to be like Beatrice. So I thought I'd just stop that right there and I said I'd wait and see how Trixy liked it before I got one for our house. Then father roared and mother put her hand over her eyes and forgot her lips were laughing all the time, and father said Anne did you ever see your mother



blush, and mother said you wicked wreck which is one of her pet names for father.

I stopped paying any attention to them and came up here but didn't feel like writing with my new blue feather pen which would look lovely in a hat. I just wanted to get a letter from poor Trixy.

It takes an awful lot of writing to tell about all the trouble and get started on dates in my new dairy, because there are just days and days now, one day and another mostly alike. Well, I got the letter from Beatrice in a few days after the ten words from her father that night at dinner, and I read it and put it away to read it again. When I came upstairs that night I couldn't find it any place and I looked and looked. Then I went to mother's desk for some paper and there it was where I never put it in all my life!

I said however did Trixy's letter get here and father roared and mother just said o Trixy's letter that came today and I just walked out of the room and left them to their fate.

Mother spoke to me about it afterwards when father was at the office and said did you mind my reading Trixy's letter dear because I wanted to see what she said about the lovely little baby and I said you should have asked-me first and she said I think I should too. But that was after the letter was all read so what difference did it make. None.

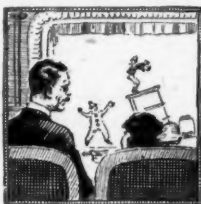
Trixy didn't say anything so very much about the lovely little baby. How does mother know its lovely, she's never seen it. Trixy wrote—I'll copy it and then tear it up. Dear Best friend I'm the most furious thing you ever met in all your life and I suppose you know all about the trouble because I heard father tell mother he'd sent a telegram

to Nan. It's the worst looking thing you ever saw, and I'm ashamed to look at it. And then they keep saying it looks like me. They don't know what they're talking about half the time. It's awfully little and of no use in the world and too soft to touch. I just leave the house when they all get to raving about it and go around the block with Pansy and Rosamond and nobody cares about my sociates. I do it to be common and get my revenge. There is only one good thing about a baby in the house you can do a lot more things without such a fuss and they let you alone more. Write to me write away.

I was going to write to poor Trixy, but had to think the letter up because I never wrote to any one in trouble before, but she wrote me another without waiting and told me she'd been skating with Sandy and tore her coat and nobody noticed, even. She says they can't name it. She wrote on her mother's best paper the one with the gold letters on it and spoiled some envelopes and a lot of sheets and used three good stamps just to be revenged. She certainly is furious. But Trixy is very young to be cast out that way, she said so herself.

And then I was having a very nice time. Father and I went to the theater ever so many times just by ourselves and took candy and flowers home to mother. I was having nice drives with mother too, ever so many more than usual and doing very well at school so things were nice and pleasant but alas alas those are the times that never last. O hum.

I came home from school one day and it was early because I did not stay for gym but there was father at the door. His hair was rumpled and he was smoking as hard as ever he could and I never knew such a handsome man could look so foolish as my father



did that minute. He said come in little Anne and the house was so still I knew there was some excitement and sure enough.



Trouble. Trouble just like Trixy's!!! The very same kind. Of course. Parents can never be original for fear people will talk.

I just stood rooted to the spot on the rug until father lifted me in his arms and dropped his pipe and said o little Anne isn't it too wonderful to have a baby brother and I said I wished Trixy hadn't started all the trouble and then he roared even though the house was so still. It was the first time in all my life I ever almost cried when father roared but I almost did and then he said as quick as ever he could mother wants to see you.

Well, mother was perfectly sick about it, but trying not to care, and to be cheerful. She kissed me just as though nothing had happened but I was not to be deceived. I said is it like Trixy's and she said o I don't think any other baby in the world could be as beautiful as *your* little brother but again I was not deceived. I just said let me see it and then a nurse brought it in from the other room and it was just as queer looking as Trixy's and I said so. Mother turned her head away and father tried to argue with me. But it did no good. I said is it going to stay all of the time and they said o little Anne yes, yes, terribly excited at such a simple question, and I just went up stairs.

Of course father had sent ten words about the trouble to Trixy's father and then when he and I were eating dinner all by ourselves we got ten words from him and father rushed up stairs to read it to mother without saying ex-

cuse me. But he came back and the nurse came down too. I lothe her. She is so smooth and cheerful and comes up behind you without a sound. I'll lock my desk. Indeed I will. She said to father how much difference in their ages and father told her nearly eleven years and she said that was a very long time, and father said but o we're so happy at last that it does n't matter and I said the longer the better and then they both laughed but father stared at me first.

I went up stairs and wrote to Beatrice but I did n't have so very much to say and only used one stamp.

December 1st. It seems all settled and it is staying. So there is no use to talk and there you are, but everything is different. They got a new housemaid and dressed Julia up for nurse. She likes it. I got another letter from Trixy today and she does not seem so furious. Just sad. She said don't you remember those good old days when we were happy and carefree only one short year ago? When you came to visit us and we had the party? That was before we were both outcasts in a cold world, the children of parents who once cared for us but who now have only a single thought and that is about a helpless infant crying in the



night and not knowing how to do anything but cry tenyson. There are times when Beatrice is sad that she talks like a book. She says she is afraid no she fears that they are going to even rob her of Sandy's sympathy and send him away to school and that will be the limit. I wonder how she knows about Sandy's sympathy and what it is like. I suppose it is gallant but it didn't sound very polite because she said



he called it a little bleery mutt and a hard luck except it was better than having any squalling kid girl sneaked in on you.

Trixy wrote to me that I must never, never say I liked it because that is all they want you to do and they are waiting. I must n't even pretend I think its feet are cute because they are and not to give them the satisfaction of seeing me laugh. Then they will say she is beginning to love it and I must n't dare. Just to get even and be revenged.

December 6th. I am very tired of all this talk. You would think there is nothing else to talk about in all this world but it. The other day mother gave a little scream and called father and I ran too. She thought its hair was going to curl and said look look. I said if its hair curled I'd never speak to it as long as I lived after all the trouble I'd had rolling mine up on kids all these years. Mother just laughed and said now would n't that be just the ironyofate if little son had beautiful curls instead of Anne and father took it up and said never mind old man, the minute I see a kink I'll cut it off—you're not going to wear lace collars and velvets—you're going to be a good old sport are n't you and we'll go off camping and you can be filthy dirty for weeks at a time and so he went on.

Well, mother looked up at him and said you are a wicked wicked husky man the very idea of talking that way to that exquisite baby and then father said Nan if you ever call my son exquisite again I'll run away with him and so they talked and talked and finally father kissed mother and she called him an old silly and he said sure I'm going to get him a dog next week—he's two months old and every boy has

to have a dog. That is most of the talk in this house now and so I got desperate and said I was going to Sunday School to get away from the subject.

You should have seen the awful look mother gave father when he threw himself down on the couch and roared. But I went and what do you think? I did n't get away from the subject at all. I walked right straight into it again and when I came home and told father when he asked me, mother said why Anne whatever do you mean. So I found the place in my Bible, the place named for them, and mother just looked at me and looked. Then she said to father they were studying something or other about Babylon I suppose—but that is not Babyland Anne and then she said to father listen dear, they are come from a far country even from Babyland and then she took me on her lap and told me about the Bible place and talked some more and said but little children come from a far country too dear from a wonderful land of dreams and hope and love, which was very nice talk and I was glad that mother said it to me and not to it. It was asleep anyway with his fist in his face.



December 14th. O whatever do you think I . . . I broke the point in my blue feather pen and had to get another and now I'm so excited

I'm afraid I'll break this one. First I got a letter from Beatrice and she was very sad. She said she had more than she could bare and that it was no consolation even to pretend she liked Pansy and Rosamond better than anybody. She said it was getting very hard not to be pleasant to it and laugh at its feet and she said woe is me woe is me they are really sending Sandy away to some

school and life is a burden. I felt very sorry for poor Trixy and wrote to her I could just imagine how hard it was to see her last friend vanish like the leaves in autumn (she said it first) but that she still had me and we would be faithful ever after.

Well, I was still being very sorry for poor Trixy when what do think. I was coming home from school, in my squirrel coat and cap and swinging my books all by myself and I heard some body whistle a perfect shriek and yell hi there. I looked around and what *do* you think. It was Sandy and he ran up and took my books before I could say a word except laugh. He has come here to this very town to Dr. Newman's School for Boys and can get out on Wednesday afternoon and on Saturday afternoon and goes to church Sunday morning. I brought him into the house and showed him to mother and she remembered him very well and was glad to see him she said, and hoped he'd come around Saturday and tell his mother when he wrote to her that she'd look out for him if he needed anything away from home, as she was particularly inter-ested in boys herself now.

Mother's manners were perfect. And Sandy said yes he'd heard we had a rummy little kid like Trixy's too and mother laughed, and he said o Trix is just as snappy as she can be yet about their kid and then I said I thought boys were really very nice. You should have seen the look mother swept over me—the kind she tells father about before he gets his fur coat off. But Sandy is coming around Saturday and I wrote to Trixy that the school they sent Sandy to was in this very town, and I should n't think she'd be so lonesome after all, when there was Sammy Stone. Yes and Jimmy Kent.

December 20th. Sandy came around and stayed to dinner Saturday night

and then father and I drove him back to Dr. Newman's School for Boys. He thinks he can come over again on Wednesday which is tomorrow. Father and mother even said something about

having some girls in and two or three other Newman boys and having a very little party between Christmas and New Year's because Sandy's father and mother went to Japan and he can't go home. I really believe this is going to be as exciting a town as Trixy's pretty soon.



December 24th. Well, Sandy did come over and mother said we might skate up and down and around the block. So we skated. Sandy says he likes my squirrel coat and cap. He had a squirrel once named Beauty. We talked about Christmas and he asked what I was going to give the kid. I'd never thought a word about it and so I tried to think. Sandy said the only thing to give a boy is a dog, and then I remembered what father said about every boy had to have a dog, and I said that is the very thing but I've spent all my money except 50 cents, and Sandy said he thought that would do if I was n't too particular about a fancy one and I said it would be a dog just the same would n't it and he said sure. So then he thought and thought and remembered that one of the women who bring the laundry to Newman's had a little boy and he had a puppy with him one day and he thought he could buy that. He is going to find out tonight and he will tell me tomorrow because it is a holiday and he is coming in for dinner. He says all the fellas are jealous of him because he knows me and



can come to our house, and it was certainly a scintch.

December 25. This has been a long day full of many new things even for Christmas. I was helping mother fix a funny little baby tree for the little thing who laughed at the lights for a while and then tried to get his hand in his mouth and then got mad and stiffened out and screamed and I heard a queer sound under the window. I looked out and there was Sandy with something under his coat and he was making all kinds of signs. I waited until father and mother and some callers forgot about me, and put on my coat and cap and ran out and brought Sandy into the kitchen.

And what do you think. There he had the little fuzzy dog under one arm and he had a little box in his hand. Here's the dog he said and it is one bargain. The boy's mother said I could have it for 30 cents but I knew you wanted to spend 50 so I got it for 50, and she scrubbed it for me first, and she said after all I did get a bargain for it was worth \$5.00 to wash it. Well, then I wanted old Doc Newman to give me some cash and he said I'd used up my allowance until the first and there I was, and the only thing to do was to earn some. So I went back to the boy's house and told him I'd sell him my knife for 40 cents and my pocket kodack for 10 and he said allrighto and then I bought these for you Sandy said. And what *do* you think. Violets. Real violets. Then I said O how perfectly

lovely and let's go and give it the dog. And Sandy said it would be a good plan to stick the dog some place or other around its bunk so it would see it the first thing when it woke up. So we went up the back stairs and crept into the room and put the dog in its bed under the canopie, and the little dog went to sleep right away and then Sandy and I named it Sport which is the same name father likes for the little thing.

But of course nothing ever turns out just the way you want it to when parents come in before it turns out. And they came in and you should have seen the look that came over my mother's face, and she told father that he must not rore so or he would throw the baby into spazams. But father took up the little dog and shook hands with Sandy and kissed me and seemed *very* much pleased, and mother said my violets were lovely but they'd better put carbolick acid in the water when they washed the dog and Sandy said o the dog has been washed by the wash-woman and then father rored again and the baby screamed and then mother sent us down stairs. It was almost time for dinner anyway. I asked Julia tonight what that poem is about the lining of a cloud and Julia said she never read such trash, but I'll find out at school. It was in a composition once and meant no matter how much trouble you have there is another side to it.

O hum. I'm going to bed. I put my violets in the tooth mug.



CAP'N SPROUL has been away on a short cruise for a much needed rest from his affairs in Scotaze. He has returned, however, and the next number of **SMITH'S**—on the news stands July 5th—will contain one of the most uproariously funny stories ever written by Holman Day. It is called "In the Matter of the Tytes," and the way the Cap'n handles the matter will delight his many admirers,



The Bright Hours Only

By Mae Van Norman Long

Author of "The Girl in Rome," "Something Different," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

A delightful summer love story. You will enjoy it.

THERE were numerous bird houses on the trail that wound upward to the tea house. Rocky Ridge Ranch looked like a Finland village in that respect. Sitting sideways on her saddle beside the rustic sundial, Penelope surveyed them approvingly. As incongruous on a Western ranch as the Japanese garden, with its wistaria and miniature bridges and pagodas, were these spindling poles, with all sorts and conditions of bird houses perched upon them.

Penelope, however, did not see the incongruity; she loved the garden and the bird houses, and she loved the crude sundial with her motto—"Nulla dies sine linea"—painted across it. She murmured it over to herself as she sat there on her cayuse on the steep trail overlooking the garden, with the wind whipping her pretty red hair about her throat and bringing to her nostrils the scent of the wild honeysuckle.

"*'Nulla dies sine linea,'*" she quoted. "Yes, I think Jeremy and I did well to settle on you."

She smiled at thought of Jeremy and his handiwork. Then she drew in a long breath and began to whistle to the

waxwings in the marshes among the reeds, idly watching her airedale, Jingo, pursue a rabbit.

A man on the other side of a miniature lake spanned by a diminutive Japanese bridge looked up, saw the girl and horse beside the sundial, and waved his cap. He trampled down the ferns and rushes, leaped the stream, and landed beside the airedale, who stood on joyous hind legs to welcome him.

"Why don't you use the bridge?" the girl asked, frowning.

"I beg your pardon. It slipped my mind. Miss Carter, you've trained your puppy well. However vociferous his welcome, he never jumps on me."

"He's had his hind paws stepped on too often!"

The man patted the airedale, rolled him over, sent him to retrieve his glove, then stood erect, surveyed the bridge, and smiled broadly.

"Jolly little bridge!"

"Do you suppose I could coax iris to bloom here?" the girl asked anxiously.

"And clematis and cherry blossoms? I'm afraid not. The most you can hope for is spirea, and of course wild honeysuckle and devil's-paintbrush."

"And yellow violets."

The man nodded, his eyes on the girl's face.

"What does it say on your sundial?" he asked presently.

"You should know, surely."

"I know what I painted on it two months ago, but I imagined it had been painted out since Jamison suggested — What was it he suggested? 'I count the bright hours only?'"

"It seems so sordid to count the bright hours only—like counting money before worth. After all, it's the dark hours that count."

Penelope flushed. She turned her horse's head toward home, and the man walked beside her slowly down the trail under the cedars and cottonwoods.

"I like our motto better, though that aluminum paint won't wear. We'll send to New York for a bronze dial and have '*Nulla dies sine linea*' etched on it, next time."

"When our ship comes in," the girl said brightly, looking at him directly for the first time.

She did not like to look at him, for each time she did so, her heart came up rapturously, she felt her eyes widen and grow dark beneath the light in his, and something warmed her veins and irradiated her. And he was only her overseer! A landscape gardener, a college man, an artist, and a naturalist, indeed; but her overseer for all that, who was coaxing apple trees to grow on the south slope, and making trellises for the wild honeysuckle, that it might climb up over the chamber windows, and tinkering with the engine in her cabin cruiser—which always appalled her with its four-cycle, four-cylinder deviltry—and in betweenwhiles scouring the woods for ferns, making bird houses, and laying out Japanese gardens on the acres of Rocky Ridge Ranch.

Rocky Ridge it was, truly; but there was a half mile of sandy beach, a view

unsurpassed of the mountains of the Cœur d'Alenes, game in plenty, good trout fishing in the lake, and a charming house on the estate.

Jeremy Blackwell had come to Rocky Ridge as overseer of the ranch a year and a half ago, soon after the death of Penelope's father. Work seemed like play to Penelope with him at her side. There were days in the open no matter what the weather, on the water casting flies for bass and trout, in the woods with the birds and the squirrels and flowers; and evenings by the fire-side, with Aunt Emily for pleasant chaperon, reading, with catholic taste, Stevenson, Kipling, George Sand, Maeterlinck, and Strindberg.

She looked at Jeremy now—at the mouth straight and clean and humorous, the eyes bright as electric sparks. His voice was in her ears, and she sighed, for that voice, vibrant, compelling, clear as a bell—a wonderful voice—made even the birds come at his call.

"When your ship comes in," he was saying gallantly, "we'll have a marble pedestal, too."

"I like the rustic one better," Penelope replied softly.

"More sylvan, isn't it? This is just the sort of spot that Pan would bring his pipes to. Can't you fancy a faun leaping out of the thicket, or a dryad disporting herself in the moonlight?"

Penelope laughed, and slipped from her horse, handing him the bridle.

"Here we are at the house. I wonder how my guests have been amusing themselves." She hesitated, looking up at him. "Bridge again to-night. You'll play?"

"If you want me."

"I want you of course; but Alice and Sara want you even more than I do. With Aunt Emily to play, we shall have just eight—two tables you see."

"My game is execrable. I lose——"

"So do I," reluctantly. "How much did you lose last night?"

"More than I could afford. Why play to-night?"

"I must. The others expect it."

"I'm glad I'm a man, so that I can never be a hostess."

"Well, I've often told you the only reason I'd like to be a man."

"Why?"

"The only reason I'd like to be a man is so that I could marry a woman," Penelope retorted.

"Here we are, Jingo," she cried, shutting the door. "In our own dear room, away from eyes and—and—hands and—and—voice."

She crossed to her window and threw



A man on the other side of the miniature lake looked up, saw the girl and horse beside the sundial, and waved his cap.

The eyes looked dangerous, and the bridle slipped to the ground.

"I must go," the girl said hurriedly, turning toward the house.

She ran up the steps, crossed the piazza, and entered the wide hall, encountering no one. The dog following her, she gained her room with a sigh of relief.

it wide. The golden sunlight rioted in, and a big bird with black plumage and a saucy red head nodded at her from the balcony railing outside; a railing studded with red flowerpots, running around three sides of the house like an old-fashioned Southern gallery, with stairs at one end leading down to the garden below.

"Well, cock of the woods, don't eat up my basket of twigs that Jeremy made me."

She looked about her at the room wherein she stood. Jeremy had fashioned more than the basket of twigs—the bed with its iron bolts, the big cedar chest and highboy.

"Cedar is too soft," he had objected when she had begged for a cedar room, but here it was, tawny-grained, satiny, and delightful against the leaf-brown walls of her room. Coyote, cougar, and bear skins lay on the smooth birch floor. A table showing the broad brown grain stood at the bedside, holding a bamboo reading lamp. The windows, low, but wide, seemed to frame the outdoor greenness and hang it on the burlaped walls.

Penelope looked upon all her possessions with an appreciative eye, gloried in the opulent golden splendor without her window, then opened the big glass doors onto the balcony, so that the puppy could come and go at will and, returning, seated herself before the mirror at her dressing table.

A sunburned girlish face—a charming face—smiled at her from the glass.

"You're an old goose!" she said to it, and shrugged. "Just a dash of cold cream, my dear, on that nose! Yes, a mechanic is all very well—and—and—a craftsman is very fine, and—and I love bird lore. But an overseer, my dear, at—what do you pay a year? Oh—impossible! Come in, come in, Alice, you angel! I was just thinking of you!"

"Thinking of me?"

A girl opened the door, crossed the room with a swirl of draperies, pounced upon a chair, sat down, and smiled at the other in the mirror. A fringe of maize-colored hair showed beneath a coronet braid worn on the very top of her small head. Her eyes were long and green, her face white as a lily. She had on a kimono of yellow silk, and

black-satin-strapped shoes, showing yellow silk stockings between the interstices.

Penelope turned and looked at her.

"You're the prettiest thing, Alice! Immaculate and dainty as a humming bird. Where have you and Dick been all the afternoon?"

"By the fire in the den."

"Oh! And Sara?"

"Off with Ned, tramping. Jamison went off with his gun. I told him you were going to ride over the ranch with Mr. Blackwell. What have you been doing?"

"Dawdling by the sundial."

"Profitable?"

"Not very. I've decided I won't change the motto."

"Or the overseer?"

Penelope's face looked blank, then stormy, then amused.

"Hear that cock of the woods hammering?" she said negligently. "Alice, have I too much powder on my nose, dear?"

The other put out a friendly arm and drew Penelope closer as she stooped.

"Powder! Pouf! You don't use enough, child. You shine like a milkmaid. Hurry, and I'll hook you up."

From the closet, Penelope took out a rather faded green poplin gown, dropped it over her head, gave a pirouette or two to permit the folds to fall into place, and backed up to her friend.

"Horrid old gown—you'll have to do. My only low cut— But I'll put on my emeralds. Alice, did you ever see my emeralds?"

A flash of joy came into Penelope's speaking eyes. With eager hands she took from her dressing table a sandalwood box, carried it to the bed and spilled its contents over the old-fashioned yellow-and-white sunflower quilt, and clapped at Alice's heartfelt "Oh!"

"It is not raining rain to me, it's rain-

ing emeralds down," she laughed, catching up the shining string of green.

"Not real emeralds?"

"Real? They're as real as my real estate. I almost never wear them."

Once on Penelope's throat, they transformed her; the country girl disappeared, and a glittering beauty in a bizarre sleeveless gown stood in her place.

"Oh, they become you! You look like a bewitched princess!" her friend cried.

The men thought the same when they saw her, though none but Ned West dared say so. But the emeralds gained immediate recognition, and Penelope was congratulated; warmly by the men, somewhat coldly by Sara Burton, a dark-eyed, unusual-looking girl in a splendid gown quite too fine for a dinner in the country.

"They're too blatant. I really don't like them," Penelope whispered to Blackwell.

She looked up anxiously, and he looked down into her eyes with a flash in his own.

"They seem to have gone out," Sara Burton murmured. "One never sees any one wearing emeralds."

"So few can wear them with impunity," Jamison said quickly. His eyes were on Penelope and Blackwell.

Dick Dunbar sauntered up, a bridge score in his hand.

"They're beautiful, aren't they? Very unusual and—er—quaint. I believe, Penelope, they're your style entirely."

Penelope smiled happily.

"Yes, Dick, I belong back in the sixties somewhere." She looked up at Jamison much as she had looked at Blackwell. "Do you like them?" she asked. "Do I wear them with impunity?"

Blackwell's face stiffened. He moved away and joined Mrs. Lester, Penelope's aunt, by the fire.

"Pen is getting spoiled," that lady complained, half in earnest. "I don't know what's coming over her! Only yesterday she wore her hair down, and a middy, or a sweater, all day long, and couldn't be coaxed to dress for dinner. Think of wearing such jewels to-night! An heirloom, my dear Jeremy—and she wears them as carelessly as if they were paste!"

"She wears them well."

"Penelope does everything well. Don't you think, Jeremy," lowering her voice, "that Mr. Jamison admires her?"

"I think it is patent," Blackwell answered.

He was the only man present not wearing a dinner jacket. Somehow, in his white flannels, with his easy bearing and his wholesome outdoor look, he made the other men seem unimportant. He fitted into the environment; he belonged. The others seemed like bits of a painted background to enhance his personality.

It was late when Sara Burton proposed bridge; Penelope had been dreading it. She looked at Blackwell, but he only smiled and crossed over to Sara's side.

Penelope could not play that evening. A perverse imp seemed to be sitting at her elbow, urging her to the wrong finesse. She held poor cards and doubled unwisely; and she lost steadily. And through all her discomfort, she knew that Jeremy, at the other table, was losing and not seeming to care.

"There was a time when people conversed," she said crossly, rising as the clock struck twelve.

"In the days of Madam de Staël," Jamison agreed, pushing back the card table. "Look out, Miss Carter! By Jove, there go your emeralds!"

The necklace, in a shower of green, was slipping, dismembered, from the girl's white throat to the Navaho rug at Blackwell's feet.



Once on Penelope's throat, they transformed her.

"Oh, the links have broken! Jeremy, don't step please!"

Penelope went down on her knees to pick up the several strands one by one, with Jamison's assistance.

"Here," Blackwell said. He reached into his pocket and brought forth a pair of long white suède gloves, took the glittering fragments from the girl's hands, dropped them into one of the gloves, and rolled the pair into a ball.

"My gloves——"

"You left them in the launch. There,

your emeralds are safe and tight! Better stow them away somewhere, Miss Carter. They're rather precious freight."

He handed her the roll, and Penelope nodded and turned toward the stairs.

"Say good night, girls, and come along. If it's fair to-morrow, we'll have out the cabin cruiser and run into town for supplies."

But she lingered to speak to Blackwell, letting the others pass her on the stairway.

"You lost again?" she asked.

She came and stood close before him on the hearthrug.

"Well, rather!"

"I shall never ask you to play again."

The light from the fire leaped over the green gown, gleaming on the white shoulders and flickering in the serious eyes. A tear hung on her lashes.

Blackwell stooped and very suddenly put his hands on her shoulders.

"Look here!" he said. "I don't mind losing—but I can't afford it." He held her closely, and his hands tightened on her shoulders. "I owe Jamison too much already," he added shortly.

"Let me pay——" Penelope began eagerly; but Blackwell's eyes stopped her. "I'm sorry, so sorry! It's better when there is no one here, isn't it, Jeremy? Out in the woods with the birds and the squirrels, or in here with

a book of an evening alone—just you and I.”

“Just you and I—do you mean that—just that, Penelope?” Blackwell’s voice was unsteady.

She put her hands up over her eyes, felt Blackwell release her shoulders, felt herself whirled into his arms.

“Please, please! I didn’t mean anything,” she begged.

But Blackwell was speaking, rather breathlessly.

“It’s late. You must go now.” His voice was more wonderful than ever.

“But to-morrow—”

“Yes, oh, yes! Good night, Jeremy.”

“Good night. Don’t look back, Penelope, as you climb the stairs. I couldn’t let you go a second time, emerald lady.”

The next morning was bright, but there was a high wind, and the lake was turbulent.

“You’ll be blowing a gale before night,” Penelope said, raising her bright head from her pillow to listen. “But the girls will only see the bright sun, and brand me a croaker.”

She sprang up, donned a bathing suit, and was out on the balcony, down the steps, and in the lake in a thrice. After which, she dressed leisurely. She could hear the yellow-hammer’s trill, and a faint “bobwhite” from the other side of the lake, and she smiled happily, idling by the window.

When she paused for a last look in her mirror, she bethought her of her emeralds. She had laid the gloves on the cedar highboy last night, and had quite forgotten them.

“I’ll stow my emeralds away now,” she said, quoting Jeremy.

She turned to the highboy. There stood the quaint brass candlestick, the faded daguerreotype of her mother in its gold frame, the bust of Dante that she loved—but the gloves—Where in the world were the gloves?

She dropped to her knees, looked beneath the dresser, the bed, and the high-

boy. She searched until she grew cross and tired and a little bit heartsick. The emeralds were gone—there was no faintest doubt about that; and how, without hands to take them, could they have left their place on the highboy before her mother’s picture?

All through breakfast Penelope was very silent. Jamison asked if her head ached; Alice watched her solicitously; and Blackwell looked troubled.

“The wind kept me awake,” she said untruthfully.

When she went to her room to dress for the launch ride, she searched again. After she had donned her white serge Norfolk and pinned her panama hat snugly to her red curls, she went outside and walked up and down the length of the balcony thoughtfully.

It would be so easy to enter the room, she thought. One could run up the stairs from the rose garden. The door of her room stood always open. This morning when she had been in the lake, for instance— She paused in her musing. Jeremy had been on the balcony when she had been in the lake. He had been moving a flower box to the south side. He would have seen any one who had entered her room at that time. Perhaps last night while she slept— She shuddered. The servants? They did not know that the emeralds were in the gloves. No one would steal an old pair of worthless gloves, surely!

The wind was blowing stiffly, Blackwell was calling, “All aboard!” somewhat stridently from the dock, and Jamison was blowing on the *Halcyon*’s conch-shell whistle.

“We’re going to get some rough weather,” Blackwell said, backing out of the boathouse after the passengers had been snugly stowed away in the stern. “Better drop the curtains or stay in the cabin.”

He went forward into the engine

room, and Penelope followed him and took the wheel.

"Engine working all right?" she asked.

"One cylinder isn't working very well. Switch on the dynamo, please, and throw in the clutch. Look out for driftwood! Wait till I close the window. You'll be deluged. By Jove, it's rough in the main lake!"

He came and sat beside her, his eyes on the engine.

The wind was dashing the spray against the windowpane before her; it hit the glass with a snap and ran down in rivulets, half obscuring her view.

"I don't like the sound of the engine," Blackwell said.

"Can't you fix it?"

He shook his head.

"Hear it?"

"I hope it won't stop," Penelope said, and gave all her attention to her work, keeping a sharp eye out for driftwood.

The sun dazzled her and made her head ache. Soon they were out of the shelter of the bay. The wind bore down upon them as they raced into the open lake, and the boat swung around like a drunken man.

"Keep her steady," Jamison called from the cabin.

Penelope laughed.

"She tugs like a horse. I'd give anything to be in the little steel launch now, bobbing up and down, the wind in my teeth."

Blackwell was hanging over his engine, filling the oilers. A series of explosions showed the engine's state of mind.

"Why are we going so slowly?" called Sara Burton. And just then there was a tearing, grinding noise, a thumping along the launch's keel; her bow rose up and dipped, she floundered from side to side, shaking and shuddering, and Penelope cried out:

"A deadhead! I've struck a submerged deadhead!"

Blackwell, still bending over the engine, muttered something between his teeth, and the engine stopped suddenly.

Jamison appeared in the door of the engine room.

"That was some bump!" he said. "But we're clear of the deadhead now. Help any?"

Blackwell shook his head.

"Something's the matter," he said, straightening up.

"Drop a nickel in the cylinder," Ned West, who had been reading George Fitch, cried facetiously.

Blackwell measured the gasoline in the tank.

"Plenty of juice?" Jamison asked, watching him.

He nodded, opened the carburetor, and gave an exclamation:

"There's no gasoline here! There's a stoppage in the feed pipe!"

Silence fell on the little group in the engine room. The launch was careening madly, the wind hitting it broadly and sending it over on its side.

"Now, if that deadhead had knocked a hole in us, with our engine refusing to work, we'd fall to on those life preservers," Jamison said.

"We'd fall just two! You're right," Ned West called from the cabin. "There are only two on board, to the best of my knowledge. Did any one put them back in the launch after we used them teaching Alice to swim yesterday?"

Penelope sat upright in her place at the wheel. She was a shade paler beneath her tan.

"Please go back, all of you," she said, as they crowded forward from the cabin. "You make me nervous."

Blackwell looked at her as Jamison closed the door of the engine room behind him rather sharply.

"Afraid?" he asked gently.

"It's time to be—isn't it? Jeremy, that deadhead did damage. Didn't it?"

Blackwell waited a minute before he replied; he seemed to be listening.

"I think," he said at last, "it put a hole in the bow."

"How long before you'll know?"

"Not very long."

He pointed to a tiny spurt of water just above the floor line.

"There are not two life preservers aboard! Ned was mistaken. There's only one——" Penelope began.

"And that is for you."

Blackwell went to a locker, extracted a cork jacket, and came toward her.

"No, no! How could you think I would take it?" cried the girl, struggling as he bent over, folding the life preserver about her and holding it there. "I won't, you know!"

With both hands, she tried to unloose his hold. Still holding her, he smiled.

"Wait a minute. You don't have to wear it, of course. Tell me something now quick! Is it Jamison? Dear——"

"Oh," shivered Penelope desperately, "the water is wetting my feet!"

With a quick motion, Blackwell dropped the jacket, stooped, and ripped the rug from the maple floor. The launch, rolling, threw him to his knees—and out of the pocket of his flannel coat fell a tightly rolled pair of white suède gloves, fairly at Penelope's feet.

She caught them up, felt the jewels



Sara began to sob hysterically. "I'll go, Jeremy," Jamison volunteered.

within, and gasped. As Blackwell regained his feet, she gave him one look.

"You? You?" she said.

"What do you mean?"

"You took my emeralds!"

Blackwell's eyes blazed.

"Are you joking?"

"I left them on the highboy last night—I saw you on the balcony this morning, from the lake."

"You—— Are you accusing me?"

He looked at her for a full second, and into his eyes came hardness and a fierce anger. "Tell me?" With an impulse wholly primitive, he seized her shoul-

ders and shook her savagely. "You little—little fool!" he said.

And then, his anger still on his face, he tossed her aside and walked back in to the cabin.

"That deadhead drove a hole in our bow," Penelope heard him say. "The water is coming in slowly. We're half a mile from Rocky Ridge. We have no life preservers, but I have a bathing suit in the locker. I can swim ashore, get out the small steel launch, and take you off, I'm confident, before the launch can sink. You can bail out the water as it comes in. There's almost no danger."

Sara began to sob hysterically.

"I'll go, Jeremy," Jamison volunteered.

"You couldn't run the steel launch," Blackwell answered brusquely.

He was already throwing off his coat, and Jamison followed him into the dressing room. In a minute Blackwell emerged.

"If the worst happens, cling to the cushions. They're cork," he shouted.

He ran to the stern, tore aside the curtains, dropped over the side, and struck out with long, powerful strokes.

Penelope watched him from the engine room, standing just where he had left her. Alice joined her.

"Will he make it? Is he a strong swimmer?" she asked, shuddering.

Penelope smiled.

"He's a very strong man," she said dryly.

"You dear!" Alice whispered, her yellow head close against her friend's red one. "He's a wonder, Pen! So fine! Such a man, Ned says!"

Out there on the churning waters, the sleek head gleamed, the arms flashed out—powerful arms—white against the encompassing blue. Soon he was a tiny speck in the waste of water and sky and somber hills. Sara was weeping with the abandon of a child, the men looked sober, and the girls in the en-

gine room leaned their faces against the pane and were silent.

After a time, Ned West thought of the glasses in the locker, and brought them out. The girls were summoned to the cabin, and they all took turns watching the swimmer.

"Jove—he's tired out!" Ned said once. Then, after a prolonged gaze: "He's certainly exhausted."

No one looked for a while. Then Alice took the glasses and handed them to Jamison, and Jamison raised a shout.

"Plucky chap! He'll make it!"

When Ned took the glasses for his turn, he reached out and grasped Sara by the arm.

"Shut up, Sara, do!" he said gruffly. "He's there!"

Penelope's pride gave way, and something seemed to give way beneath her feet. She sank to the floor and buried her face in her hands. She sat there for a long time until she heard Dick's cry:

"The launch! The launch! He's coming!"

And on her ears sounded the pop-pop of the single-cylinder engine in the little steel launch. The water was gaining in the engine room now, but they were scarcely heeding it, watching, rather, the progress of the launch over the dancing whitecaps.

Penelope raised her head. Jamison was regarding her with an absorbed expression.

"He's all right," he said oddly, in an undertone.

Penelope's eyes flashed.

"But I am not! Alice and I are worn to thin frazzles—whatever they may be. Why do you stare at me so? You didn't expect me to emulate Niobe, did you? Am I a sight?"

"I've been envying Blackwell, out there, once or twice. Perhaps I was wrong."

The others were at the door of the

engine room, and Penelope and Jamison were practically alone.

"Until to-day, you know, I hadn't felt sure that you cared for Blackwell, Pen dear. I was hoping like—like everything—that you didn't. But a while ago, some way I almost gave up hope. Was I wrong, Pen dear?"

"I'm sure," said Penelope, straightening up and dabbing at her eyes with her handkerchief, "I'm sure that I haven't the slightest idea of what you're trying to say. Oh, please go away and leave me alone! You're too absurd—and mistaken certainly!"

"People," cried Sara radiantly, "here is our hero, almost alongside! Pen dear, is my nose shiny? I lost my vanity box overboard."

Everybody laughed.

In another moment the stanch little launch was alongside, and the men were handing the women over the rail to Blackwell. When Penelope's turn came, she almost fell, so anxious was she to avoid Blackwell's hand. But he gave her bare assistance, and did not glance at her.

"Well, I'm thankful that's over and we're safe and sound. That might have been an ugly contretemps!" Dick Dunbar said, as the life-saving launch landed high and dry on the beach at Rocky Ridge and one by one the bedraggled passengers set foot on terra firma. "I want to propose three cheers for Jeremy Blackwell."

A shout went up.

"And a tiger!" shouted Jamison.

Under cover of the enthusiasm, Penelope slipped away.

She kept her room the rest of the day. Toward night, a note was brought to her door:

I hand you herewith my resignation. I feel sure you will be as pleased as I am to sever our business relations at once.

JEREMY BLACKWELL.

The moon was coming up, faint and white; the sky was purple and yellow

where the sun had slipped down to rest behind the mountains; the lake was indigo and milk. Penelope watched it all from her window, the letter in her hand. What would it be like at Rocky Ridge without him? What would it mean to her? What should she do? What—should—she do?

"Oh, how I despise him!" she cried between her heartbeats. But in all her imaginings she had never considered Rocky Ridge without him. She could not run the ranch alone, with the help of her aunt. When would he leave?

Seized with a sudden terror, she penned a line hurriedly:

Will you stay a week or two—till I get my bearings?

The answer came back:

Certainly.

Certainly! Some way that simple word conjured up Jeremy Blackwell before her as nothing else would have done just then. Courteous, helpful, a very rock of strength and gallantry, he had always seemed.

She turned away from the window and, seizing her sweater, sped down the balcony steps to the garden, on to the woods, and up the trail to her favorite retreat by the sundial beneath the yews. Leaning against the pedestal, she smiled forlornly to herself at the motto Jeremy had traced there. Then her anger flamed up. A fool, forsooth! Well perhaps she was, for ever having dreamed that a man like Blackwell would stoop to purloin her jewels.

She began to sob furiously.

There was a long, melodious whistle in the thicket. Blackwell was calling his setter. He was coming to the yew grove. She dried her eyes roughly and stooped to gather a spray of spirea.

When he stepped onto the bridge and saw her there by the sundial, he halted and half turned.

"Mr. Blackwell," she called.

He crossed over at once.



Each day she saw him start off with Sara, a camera over his shoulder, a net in his hand.

"After all, I have decided to have this motto painted out and Mr. Jamison's substituted. 'I count the bright hours only'—you remember? Please do this the first thing in the morning."

A slow, deep flush mounted to the

very roots of Blackwell's hair. He looked straight into her eyes. There was a curious intentness about his look.

"I congratulate you," he said quietly.

Penelope turned and walked away, and after a flaming glance at her muti-

nous shoulders, he called his dog and strode on.

The sun came up gayly the next morning. Penelope looked out of her window in time to see Blackwell crossing the garden with brushes and paint box. She heard Jamison's greeting:

"Hello, Blackwell! Studying color vibrations so early this morning?"

And Blackwell's response:

"Not exactly. I've been painting your motto on the sundial."

An hour later, Jamison told Penelope about it on the piazza.

"He had good nerve, Pen—by Jove, he had! Never blinked."

"Why should he?"

"My motto there—it means—
What does it mean, Penelope?"

Penelope was unbending.

"It means that I like your motto——"

"Can't you say more than that, Pen?"

Jamison's handsome face was a shade too close; Penelope frowned.

"Don't bother me—please. I like you—I like your motto. I like Mr. Blackwell—I don't like his motto. Besides, it was old and wearing off."

It seemed to Penelope, during the next few days, that every time she looked into the garden she saw Jeremy and Sara together. They read together, sketched together, botanized together, and kodaked together.

"I didn't know Sara was so versatile," Ned West hazarded, with a curious look at Penelope.

"No? You have a great deal to learn, Ned."

"Versatility seems to be latent in all women."

"We all have phases."

"Phases! Why can't you be honest and say hypocrisy?"

Penelope laughed.

"You're awfully young, Ned dear."

"Why do you flout fellows so, Pen? You're never twice the same. It's only ugly girls who have to be kittenish."

They were sitting on the beach, resting on the warm sand after a swim.

"Could I be pretty, Ned, with my hair?"

"You couldn't be pretty without it."

Penelope pondered this, tried not to laugh, and succeeded.

"Ned, I'm not kittenish, only—nervous. Sara gets on my nerves! I'm going up to town to-morrow to the dentist's. I feel in my bones, Ned, that I shall be detained several days."

But she was not. Jamison followed her, and Penelope found that his attentions were as irksome as Sara's versatility, of which Ned complained. She fretted for a day, and then, in desperation, winged her way back to the ranch like a homing pigeon.

"Who leaves the pine tree leaves his friend," she quoted to them all on the piazza that night.

The wind was sighing in the honeysuckle, the lake was singing to the shore in the twilight, and the moon was rising over the ranch house.

"What's the rest of it, dear?" Mrs. Lester asked, smoothing Penelope's roughened head as it rested against her knee.

"Unnerves his strength, invites his end."

In the half light, she felt Blackwell's eyes full upon her.

"It's a libel on the city," Jamison said.

"But it's true," Mrs. Lester said softly, "for some of us."

Sara yawned.

"Aren't we to have any bridge to-night?"

Penelope sat up.

"Do you seriously propose bridge on a night like this?" she asked. "Count me out."

"Count me out," said Blackwell.

Sara hesitated.

"Don't be nasty, you two! Mrs. Lester, will you play?"

Mrs. Lester arose with alacrity.

"I'd like a game of cribbage with

Mr. Jamison," she declared, following the others indoors.

Blackwell left his chair and crossed over to Penelope.

"I hope by now you have succeeded in finding some one to take my place," he began courteously.

Penelope shook her head.

"I can't ask you to remain longer, I know. But—I really haven't found any one. You—have something in view?"

"I'm going East."

"Oh!" said the girl.

"I feel that I must go soon. I must take up my new duties by the first."

He waited. Penelope was silent.

"I'd be a cad if I didn't apologize to you now and here for my conduct in the launch. No matter what the provocation, I should not have forgotten myself so. I was a brute! I have an ungovernable temper—and—I hate injustice." His voice had lost all its musical cadence, and his face held a look of hurt, white misery and mortification. "That's all."

He ran down the steps; but Penelope's voice arrested him.

"I could forgive the morning in the launch—but you've made no attempt to prove your innocence." Her voice was so low that Blackwell could scarcely hear her. "You haven't even said you didn't take the emeralds."

But Blackwell was gone, whistling to his dog.

As the days passed, Penelope realized that before long Blackwell must surely leave the ranch. Each day she saw him start off with Sara, a camera over his shoulder, a net in his hand; and each day she sat on the piazza with Jamison and listened to his pleasant and somewhat inane conversation and lavish compliments.

She grew heartsick, ennuied, and impatient; and she knew in her heart that some day she would burst all conventional bonds, leave Jamison in the midst of a sentence, rush to Blackwell

like a primitive woman, and demand an explanation.

Tears were in her heart all the time; tears were dangerously near her voice; and she grew to hate conversation.

The moment came sooner than she expected when, in a final upheaval of elemental womanhood, she knew she could bear it no longer.

Blackwell and Sara were in the garden, with the microscope. Penelope had been having an unusually long siege with Jamison on the piazza.

"Who is Sylvia? What is she?" he was quoting.

"Bother!" cried Penelope, jumping up.

She scattered her paints, her brushes, and her papers to the four corners of the piazza, rushed up to her balcony, and, leaning over the railing among her red flowerpots, called out to her overseer shrilly:

"Jeremy! Oh, Jeremy!" Blackwell took off his cap and looked up. "May I speak to you?"

He apologized to Sara and came up the stairs very slowly, to lean negligently against the veranda railing, waiting for her to speak.

"I only want to ask you," Penelope began, "if Sara knows that you took the emeralds?"

"After which, I'd like to inquire if Jamison knows that you think I took them?"

"What has that to do with the case?" "Everything. Since he knows how they came to be in my possession."

Penelope's breath came fast.

"And I may ask him?"

Suddenly the man's forced calm gave way.

"Ask him? No, you may not! You can listen to me! How easy it seems for you to heap up insults! I'll tell you. And then I'm going—at once—instantly—do you hear? You——"

He broke off. Penelope's face frightened him.

"You're not—not guilty?" she stammered.

"Listen! I didn't steal your emeralds! Jingo was playing with the gloves on the dock, tossing them about like a ball. You can see his teeth marks in the kid. Jamison was standing near me. He saw me put the gloves in my pocket. I intended to hand them to you at once, but that confounded engine drove everything out of my mind. Now ask Jamison if you want to!"

Blackwell's tone was contemptuous, his eyes—— The girl put her hands over her own to hide the savagery in his.

"Please go!" she whispered.

"I'm going. Good-by, Miss Carter."

She heard his steps on the stairs, heard Sara's greeting as he rejoined her; and then, as always when in trouble, she stole through the house and dashed away to the shadow of the yews.

She sat on the ground, and a chipmunk above her head threw down yew berries over her white gown.

"What a fool I've been!" the girl whispered over and over to herself.

She looked at the sundial. It seemed to mock her with its shining face. And then, as on the evening when she had spoken to Blackwell on this very spot, she was weeping tempestuously, her arms around the sundial and her face hidden.

"I beg your pardon," said a voice.

It was Blackwell's voice, but it was

not quite steady. Penelope lifted her head.

"I came to say good-by to the—the sundial and the Japanese garden. I'm sorry to intrude." She made a motion with her hand. "Is there—anything I can do?"

A shake of the head.

After a moment Penelope glanced toward him. She saw him take two strides from her in the direction of the house, she heard the steamer whistle at the next landing, and she spoke.

"Mr. Blackwell——"

"Yes?"

Blackwell paused at once.

"There is something you can do——"

"Yes?"

"When you go to New York, order a new face for the sundial—a bronze face, please——"

Blackwell was at her side.

"And the motto?" he said painfully. "Hurry, please! The boat is whistling for this landing."

Penelope's face crimsoned, her tears overflowed; but she looked directly into the eyes above her.

"The motto—'*Nulla dies sine linea*,'" she said.

Two arms went around her swiftly.

"Our motto, Pen—yours and mine? Say it!"

"Yours and mine."

The steamer whistled in vain. Under the yews two people walked in Arcady.

RETURN

NOW I, who walked where sorrows are
And kept a tryst with pain,
From all the trails that led me far
Come back to Youth again.

Why will you not, then, comrade, cling
And love me as before?
Forget, forget my wandering!
Receive me, Youth, once more!

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.

Ostracized

CHAPTERS I. to XVIII.

Liddy Fitzenberger, a girl of eighteen, living with her father and her step-mother in the Pennsylvania-Dutch village of Virginsburg, has grown up in a curious state of isolation. Something in the past of Mr. Fitzenberger and his second wife—Liddy does not know what—has resulted in their ostracism by the village, and Liddy, innocent as she is, is included in the ban. Her father, a well-to-do retired tanner, moves through life as devoid of emotion, apparently, as a wooden automaton, paying no more attention to Liddy than if she did not exist; and his wife, while lavishing endearments upon her husband, is positively hostile to his daughter. Liddy's few timid attempts to solve the mystery that hangs over the household are futile. A picture, found in a trunk in the attic, of a sad-faced young woman, with a child at either side and a baby in her lap, is Liddy's only clew to the past, and cut off as she is from all human intercourse, she has no way of learning the fate of her mother and the other children. Into this lonely life comes a great joy in the shape of a friendship with the son of a neighboring farmer, Elmer Wagenhorst, a young man of intelligence and native refinement, who is attracted to Liddy first by her beauty and then by her mental qualities, for in her solitude she has thought and read more than most girls of her age. Elmer is to enter college in the fall, and for fear of imperiling his chance of an education he does not dare arouse his father's anger by avowing his friendship for Liddy. She agrees to meet him secretly, though she instinctively feels that there is something ignoble in his conduct. She has the same instinctive sense of revulsion when Elmer, upon his departure, arranges for a clandestine correspondence. Her loneliness after Elmer leaves is heightened by her fear that he may advance so far beyond her that he will no longer find her companionable. Spurred on by this dread, she ventures to ask her father for permission to take lessons of the Lutheran clergyman, Mr. Armstrong, and obtains his indifferent consent. Young Mr. Armstrong and his wife, newcomers in the neighborhood, readily accept her as a pupil, showing only amusement at her conscientious warning that a friendship with her may harm them with the villagers. The Armstrongs are as much of a puzzle to their parishioners as the latter are to them. Well born, cultured, traveled, blessed with ample means, and so independent of the hitherto omnipotent church council, they display a lack of concern for public opinion that staggers Virginsburg. Their efforts to inspire the conservative little community with progressive ideas meet for the most part with open hostility, Mr. Wagenhorst being one of their bitterest opponents. In Liddy, however, they find a kindred soul, and under the influence of their friendship, she develops rapidly. She tries to learn from Mrs. Armstrong, as she had once from Elmer, the secret of her family's ostracism, but Mrs. Armstrong, like Elmer, shrinks from telling her.

On his return at Christmas, Elmer is swept out of his habitual caution by his passion for Liddy and becomes engaged to her, still insisting upon secrecy, however. Liddy is too much in love with him to refuse such an arrangement, though she feels deeply the humiliation of it. Elmer does not go home for the summer vacation or during the following winter. He makes such phenomenal progress in his studies that he is promoted to the senior class, and a brilliant future is predicted for him. He begins to doubt whether Liddy is the right wife for a rising young man, and this doubt becomes certainty when he meets Nedra Appleton, the daughter of the college president, whose natural charms are enhanced in his eyes by her sophistication and her background of culture. Nevertheless, he has a pang of jealousy when her brother, Gail Appleton, goes into raptures over a photograph of Liddy in Elmer's possession. Gail, who is connected with a publishing firm, is at the time very much interested in the unknown author of a book, "A Village Tragedy," that his firm is bringing out, and he declares that Liddy is the exact image of this author as he has imagined her to be.

OSTRACIZED

by
HELEN R. MARTIN



Author of "Tillie, a Mennonite Maid," "Barnabetta," "For a Mess of Pottage," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

The story of a girl who was ostracized, but whose ability and force of character turned a tragedy into a triumph.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEAR ELMER: I hope you have been too busy to notice how long it is since I have written to you—two whole weeks! But so much has been happening to me, and I've had so much to attend to—and my father has not been well.

Elmer, something wonderful has been happening to me. I don't know whether to write it to you or to wait and tell you when you come home next summer. I want to see your face when you hear it—you'll be so proud and delighted! And that's half my own pleasure in my good fortune—that it will make *you* happy, dear Elmer. Nothing good that comes to me but I feel its value doubly for your sake. Surely you *will* come home next summer, won't you? It seems so long since we looked into each other's eyes! We shall almost have to get acquainted with each other all over again, for we've been *living*—both of us—haven't we?

That friend of yours you write about—Mr. Gail Appleton—tell me more—everything. It interests me so much.

Elmer paused here to wonder whether it would be wise to tell her of Gail's exuberance over her photograph. But he decided it would not. He had a vague feeling that she would be less *his* if she found other men admiring her. He read on:

And now I must tell you of a great honor I've had. Last Wednesday night a baby girl was born at the parsonage. I can never tell you what a fearful time of dread I spent

that night—Mr. Armstrong and I. I have become so deeply attached to Mrs. Armstrong, the one and only woman friend I have ever had, and the thought of what might happen to her in that ordeal made the heavens black! But she is well and radiant. And, Elmer! Think of it! They have named their baby girl Lydia! For *me*!

Oh, I can't tell you, I simply cannot find words to tell you, what this simple little fact means to me, this first recognition I've ever had of being of some worth—this testimony that I am not a contamination! Mrs. Armstrong says I have become her dearest friend and that I have given her as much as she has ever given me. Of course I can't see how that can be, for I feel that she has given me *everything*.

My life seems so full now, Elmer, and it used to be so gruesomely empty, didn't it? I never now find it necessary to tramp all day in the woods so as to exhaust myself to numbness! I've work to do—work that I love—and friends; and life is rich and I am happy. How happiness does make one well and strong and *good*, Elmer! You will say it is the other way—that goodness makes one happy—but I'm sure no. I feel so charitable and kindly toward every one since I have love and friends. And I used to feel very bitter sometimes. I can now even pity Joye for her isolated and morbid life, though she does seem contented enough not to need pity.

I seem to have developed a sense of humor over certain aspects of life in this village—for instance, the excitement and indignation over the fact that Mrs. Armstrong keeps a black "mammy" for her baby. The sight of

that mammy wheeling the baby carriage about is too much for Virginsburg! The foundations of civilization are being uprooted by such an innovation. Mrs. Armstrong is "unmotherly, unwomanly, lazy"—though her baby is really the only infant in the village that is scientifically and perfectly cared for. But two servants for two people and an infant! It beggars language—even the Pennsylvania-Dutch language! You can just imagine it all, can't you, Elmer?

Elmer found himself shaking with laughter over this bit of Virginsburg—so well he understood it.

But, Elmer dear, this letter is too much about me and not enough about you. I am ashamed not to have written you by return mail about Mr. Cranford's fine compliment on your successful work for him. That you should be able to do all that work for a lawyer, drawing up "briefs" and other mysterious things, when you're not yourself a lawyer, and at the same time keep up your studies in the brilliant way you do—well, I'm very proud of you. If you don't break down again from overwork, such perseverance and industry as yours, Elmer, will certainly win a great place in life.

You write me much about your ambitions and I am human enough to thrill, as I read, in my certainty that you will attain them—you who belong to me and to whom I belong. But I want the highest and best for you, Elmer, and I'm not going to let you accept a lower good. You talk of your misfortune in having been born of "common blood," but whether we are common or fine depends on nothing so accidental as what you call "social advantages" and "position" and all that. Commonness and fineness are within ourselves, surely, aren't they? No matter how humble your birth, you can "hitch your wagon to a star" and mount to the top, the spiritual top, the only height worth aiming for. I'm trying for it myself, Elmer, and I don't find it easy. I'm sometimes tempted to compromise by hitching to the moon—but I fight off the temptation.

The Neighborhood Association holds its own, though the controversy in the village between its members and those who oppose it is the chief joy of life in Virginsburg. I am as much out of everything here as ever. The Armstrongs are not able to break down the prejudice against me. I never wanted them to try. They are here on such sufferance anyway. If it were not for their financial independence, they would have been sent away long ago. It is a pity your father

has never allowed your sister Sally to get all that she might have from the Neighborhood Association and from the Armstrongs. Don't you see, Elmer, that all this village blindness comes from their *not* looking "unto the hills", but bending their eyes to the earth? So don't you let worldly ambition keep *your* eyes down!

Ever since Christmas I've felt I've turned a corner into the bright road that looks straight to your approaching home-coming!

Elmer dear, this summer you must get up your courage to tell me all about this mystery of my parents. Mrs. Armstrong was going to tell me, but I would not ask her to dwell upon anything so unpleasant before her baby came, and now I feel I want to hear it from no one but you. She has named her baby after me, and I don't want her reminded of that dark side of my life. It seems to me, somehow, that if you and I can't face this thing out together, we are not ready to unite our lives. Don't you see that, Elmer?

Write to me soon, and I promise not to wait so long again to answer.

My faithful love to you, dear, dear Elmer.
LIDDY.

Elmer looked very thoughtful as he slowly folded the closely written sheets and slipped them into their envelope.

"How I *need* Liddy to keep me up to the mark!" he reflected.

Liddy's constant challenge to a high ideal of life always met with an intellectual and emotional response from Elmer, though the stimulus was usually very short-lived.

"Aren't women and girls queer?" he said to himself, with a shrug and a smile. "Making such a fuss about that infant's being named after her! And she prefaces it by saying 'something wonderful' has happened to her, which she thinks she can't tell me until next summer because she wants to see my proud and happy countenance when she breaks the grand news to me! And then in the next sentence she tells me what this wonderful news *is*—a baby's been named after her!"

He laughed indulgently at her childishness, her feminine inconsistency.

"But after all," he thought, "it's aw-

fully pathetic, her caring so much about a little mark of recognition like that and thinking it could mean just as much to me as it does to her! Dear Liddy!"

He took out her photograph and gazed at it with his pulses beating.

"Loving me as she does, how easily I might persuade her—unsophisticated as she is, unprotected and alone—to give herself to me without marriage! But I'd cut off my own head before I'd do that!"

And feeling himself virtuous above other men and extremely chivalrous to Liddy in this high resolve, he chastely kissed her printed face and went to bed.

CHAPTER XIX.

A week later, at the time appointed for Elmer to hear Gail Appleton read to him the manuscript of "A Village Tragedy," though he dined at the president's mansion that night, the manuscript was not read—for the reason that after dinner, instead of going with Gail to his room, he went with Nedra to the library and refused to be enticed thence by the lure of a manuscript novel.

"I'm much more interested in Miss Nedra than in the heroine of 'A Village Tragedy,'" he told Gail. "I'm sure your village heroine isn't half so entertaining—besides not being visible to the material eye—as Miss Ned is!"

Gail never again offered to read him the story. Indeed, he did not again have an opportunity, for from that time on, Elmer, with a dogged determination and persistency characteristic of the Pennsylvania Dutch, devoted every bit of the scant time he could spare from his work to his campaign upon the difficult fortress of Nedra Appleton's heart, and his men friends were "laid upon the shelf".

That he received but moderate encouragement from Nedra did not daunt him, for it was not "her way" to manifest signs of caring for anything on

earth. That she tolerated him at all meant more from her than a gushing pursuit of him might have meant from another girl. She was at least sufficiently gracious to him, both in public and private, to make him envied and respected by every young man of Collegeville and more than ever desirable in the eyes of the maidens; to both of which facts Elmer was not blind.

He felt that he was behaving very scrupulously indeed, during this time, in his attitude toward Liddy, taking pains, in his letters to her, to ignore the understanding of a betrothal between them, to refrain from being loverlike in his language, to keep their intercourse strictly on a basis of mere friendship, in short, to "let her down easily."

Yet he couldn't help feeling piqued—unreasonably, he knew—when in her replies she did not seem to notice his unloverlike tone. Now and then he even had the grace to feel ashamed as he realized that her own utter loyalty made unfaithfulness on his part unthinkable to her. The possibility of Liddy's high idea of him becoming lowered or tarnished was not agreeable to contemplate.

But, like most men, he was a sophist where his self-interest was concerned, and he found no difficulty in perfectly justifying his conduct to his own conscience and convincing himself that, in view of all the circumstances, Liddy, if she ever did reproach or criticize him, would be unfair and unreasonable.

When, in the spring, "A Village Tragedy" came out and made an instantaneous "hit" with all classes of readers, both the discriminating and the superficial, Elmer, by this time quite too absorbed in his own love story to feel any interest or curiosity as to any other, did not find time to read the quickly famous novel.

Gail, meantime, though living intensely in a world of his own, was not

too much engrossed to keep a watch on the affairs of his little sister.

"How about it, Ned?" he demanded of her one night, coming down from his room to join her just after Elmer's rather late departure. "Are you falling in love with Wagenhorst?" He flung himself upon a big couch before the fire and drew her to his side. "Better tell your big brother. Your happiness means to me at least as much as my own, you know."

"You dear!" she drawled, letting her dark head fall on his shoulder. "No, I'm not in love—with him. But I don't mind his coming. It doesn't especially bore me."

"That's very warm language indeed—for you. But I'd suggest you don't get any warmer."

"I thought you admired him. He's your friend. And you never bother making friends with people who aren't rather worth while."

"He's tremendously worth while. He's remarkably able. And he's the cleanest-mindest fellow I know. I've always found him upright. He's a gentleman——"

"Sure?"

Nedra yawned sleepily as she challenged this latter assertion.

"Aren't you sure?" asked her brother quickly.

Nedra shook her head.

"He's too fastidious to be quite a gentleman."

"What do you mean, you weird child?"

"I mean he's self-consciously fastidious. Men like you and father are unconsciously so. You don't *think* about it. Why, brother, Mr. Wagenhorst even *talks* about it!"

"Talks about being fastidious?"

"He tells me he is 'awfully so'."

"Is that all you have against him?"

"There's something else that I've not been able to lay hold of. I can't get at what it is that keeps me from being

swept off my feet by a man so magnificently handsome, of so strong a personality and such brains—only I don't care for his brains. I don't like brains—and his are not a very interesting kind. They're the kind that take in and absorb, but don't give out much."

"You do hit it sometimes, Ned, with your random shots! Wagenhorst, though fearfully acute, is *not* very original or temperamental. Tell me, dear—is it, perhaps, a little sense of distrust that holds you back?"

"Distrust? No," she answered, considering it. "I don't think I distrust him. Why? Do you?"

"I certainly never did—until— Well, one night he showed me the photograph of a very lovely girl, who, he admitted, loved him. He wouldn't say *he* was in love. He was extremely mysterious and noncommittal about her. But I know their relation must have been close."

"How do you know?"

"From what was written on the back of the photograph—and from his carrying it about with him. I'm not hurting you, little sister, by telling you this? It's to save you from possible future hurt that I want you to know just where you're drifting with this man of whom we know so little. In all his intimacy with you, has he told you anything of himself or his family? He's never told *me* anything."

"I've become distinctly aware that he avoids speaking of his people. I've just now discovered, brother, what it is that keeps me from finding him as satisfactory as he *looks*."

"What is it?"

"He lacks tenderness."

"How did you just *now* discover it?"

"The way you asked me whether you were hurting me. That wonderful kindness that gets into your voice sometimes, brother, that makes me adore you so—a something I rarely hear in any other man's voice. Mr. Wagen-

horst would never be so concerned about hurting any one as he would be about hurting his own smug self. I don't know why I feel so sure of it—that same old woman's intuition, I suppose. Of course it's hard for me to find any man quite satisfactory when I've got to compare him with you! Oh, Gail dear," she added in a low voice, "your wife will be the most enviable of women! If you should make a mistake and marry a woman who didn't appreciate you—who made you unhappy and hurt you—I'd poison her!"

She said it quietly—so quietly that Gail shuddered in his conviction that she *would* do it.

"So you think Wengenhorst lacks tenderness? I wonder!" He mused over it. "He was rather cold-blooded about the maiden of the photograph."

"He's so carefully calculating," said Nedra. "A man that is never rash is dangerous. If father heard me say a thing like that! Wouldn't I get a homily on ill-considered contradictions!"

"It's Shakespearean! 'A man that's never rash is dangerous.' You have accidentally made an epigram, Neddie! Well," he concluded, rising, "let's go to bed. I only wanted to say to you—don't go falling in love and getting yourself unhappy over any man until



"I want to take you into my arms and crush you, you maddening, adorable Nedra!"

you've first let me look him over and size him up."

"Getting unhappy?" she repeated, also rising slowly and strolling after her brother to the stairs. "Does falling in love involve getting unhappy?"

"The most intense suffering—because the most intense joy—that the human soul can know!" affirmed Gail.

"Have you been in love so often and so hard, dear?" she asked curiously as, arm in arm, they went up the wide stairway of the old mansion. "I supposed you had outgrown that kind of moonshine, your letters had become so sensible and practical. But of course, as soon as I got home, I saw that you were in a pitiable state!"

"You saw? What were the signs I hung out, you precocious infant?"

"Your alternate exuberance and gloom, your absent-mindedness, the light of insanity in your eyes. But I can't discover who it is! You spend all your free time in your room. Do you write to her?"

He hesitated a perceptible instant; then answered, "Yes."

"Where did you meet her?"

"Never met her."

"Oh, brother, you're too old to be so foolish!"

He laughed at her matronly reproof of him.

"But I do know her, Ned," he protested. "I know her as I know myself."

"The heroine of some poem or play or novel?"

"Yes."

"Won't you ever grow up?" she said despairingly, as, pausing at her bedroom door, she held up her face to kiss him good night.

In spite of his sister's assurances, Gail was not at ease about Wagenhorst's assiduous attentions to her.

"From what I've seen, at dances and receptions, of Wagenhorst's fascination for girls," he reflected, "it seems to me that Ned would have to be adamant to be able to receive so much of his gallant attention and remain untouched! She may care without realizing it. Why doesn't he tell us something about himself and his family? It's our right to know, if he's going to be so intimate with us."

But he consoled himself with the fact

that the summer's vacation, which was at hand, would separate his sister from her admirer and either bring their relation to an end or to a climax.

"He'll go home to his 'Liddy' and either be brought again under the spell she must certainly have once cast upon him, or he'll find he's in love with Ned and declare himself. And in case of the latter catastrophe, I'll take his case in hand and investigate it! No more mysteries if he hopes to be anything to Ned!"

Elmer loathed the thought of going home for the summer. He wished to remain in Collegeville, working for the lawyer who now employed him and coaching boys for college. But his father's arbitrary command that he must spend the vacation at home, helping on the farm, left him no choice in the matter, since he was still partially dependent upon financial help from home.

So he carefully planned the course he must pursue in the present precarious stage of his ambitious courtship of Nedra Appleton. He felt that if caution were not his watchword, if he took one hasty or ill-considered step, his beautiful castle in Spain would tumble about his head. For it certainly was a castle in Spain for him to think of marrying Nedra Appleton. However, this was America—"where material success can marry anything," he assured himself. "And I certainly shan't have the nerve to propose to *her* before I have scored big!"

CHAPTER XX.

In spite of his earnest resolve to be cautious, Elmer's feelings did, after all, get the better of him somewhat in his farewell visit with Nedra.

It was an evening in June. He was to leave for Virginsburg early the next morning. They were strolling in a se-

cluded and wooded part of the college campus.

"If you go flying through your law course next year at the fearful rate of speed you've gone through your academic course," Nedra remarked languidly, "father says you'll be on the supreme bench before we know it! What's your awful hurry?"

"Your father said that?" Elmer asked, flushing with gratified pride. "Praise from *him*, you know, means something to a man! And I welcome every sign that others believe in my ultimate success! Because it seems incredible, sometimes, that I ever can amount to much, I've got such odds to fight."

"What odds?"

"Want of means, for one thing. *That's* what's my 'hurry', since you ask. Preparing for one's career and trying at the same time to earn one's living isn't funny. I want to get done with it."

"I dare say."

"The summer will seem an endless eternity to me."

"You'll be so anxious to get back to your work?"

"To my work—and to you!" he ventured, his voice deepening significantly. "It will be a gruesome three months—without you—Nedra! May I dare to call you 'Nedra'? I always *think* 'Nedra'! I love it! *May* I?"

"Help yourself."

"So long as you don't indignantly resent my nerve, I'm going to feel encouraged."

"Indignantly resent? Dear me, never expect anything so energetic as that from *me*. I like my ease. And I'm especially lazy just now, after the late hours all this week at the college dances and other frolics. I'm glad it's over."

"When its being over means we part?"

"I'll let *you* worry over that."

"Don't you care?"

"I'll manage to bear up. Don't be anxious about me." She patted her lips to cover a yawn. "Just now father's having me do a course in—well, I don't know just what it is. Biblical exegesis, perhaps. I spend an hour a day on it. That's why I'm so sleepy. It's such dope."

"Will he make you keep it up all summer?"

"Oh, if it gets too tiresome, I can have a sick headache over it. We all go to Maine for the summer, you know."

"I know! So hopelessly out of my reach!"

"Maine out of reach? It isn't the north pole."

"It might as well be—for me."

"Why? Can't you run up to us over a week-end?"

"You'd like to have me come?" he asked eagerly, his heart leaping at this mark of her interest in him, even while he wondered what so traveled an individual as she was would think of the fact that his journey of one hundred miles from Allentown to Collegeville was the longest he had ever taken in his life, and that going to Maine would seem a greater experience to him than going to Japan to her.

"Be assured I shouldn't suggest your coming," she said, "if I shouldn't like it. Shall you have your 'Liddy' this summer?"

Elmer concealed the shock her question gave him.

"What do you know of *her*?" he managed to inquire nonchalantly.

"Gail told me. May I see her photograph?"

"I haven't it with me."

"Gail said you always carried it."

"A gratuitous assumption on his part. I never carry it."

Which was true. He did not now deem it prudent to carry Liddy's photograph about with him.



"I knew Min Doerr before you did, Elmer Wagenhorst, and I ain't leavin' you cut me out if you *are* a college grad'yate!"

"Well, *will* you see her this summer?" Nedra persisted.

"But she isn't *you*. It's you I shall want!"

"Then come up and bring your sister for a week-end."

"That is very kind of you. Thank you—Nedra."

"Will you?"

"I told you—she couldn't be spared from home."

"Doesn't she *ever* go away?"

"Not often."

There was a moment's constrained silence between them, during which Nedra wondered whether, perhaps, the sister were insane, or weak-minded, that her brother should be so odd about her.

"Nedra?"

"Well?"

"When the time comes when I have

made good—when I've reached a place worthy to offer you—may I hope?"

"Do you mean you are proposing?"

It was like her to come plump out with an embarrassing finality like that! He hadn't meant it to be an actual proposal—he only wanted to establish a tacit understanding. To "propose" before he had anything to offer seemed to him so presumptuous as to jeopardize his chances. Also, he didn't mean to be so directly traitorous to Liddy as to ask another woman to marry him while Liddy still looked upon their dubious secret relation as a real betrothal. He honestly meant to do "the right thing" in regard to Liddy; to let things between him and her die out gradually and naturally—not break them off ruthlessly.

Elmer really thought he wanted to

avoid being dishonorable. He did not realize that it was only the appearance of dishonor he wished to avoid.

"I shouldn't presume to propose to you, Nedra, before I have something to offer you—until I have won a position you can be proud of."

"Wouldn't you yourself be enough to offer me?"

"Do you think so?" he asked softly, his heart beating high.

"If you yourself were *not* enough, your old 'position' that you talk about certainly wouldn't tempt me. Dear me, I've got to put in two hours at the dress-maker's to-morrow! Isn't one's life awful, when you come to think of it? Excuse me for thinking you were proposing. It sounded that way. I'm glad I was mistaken, for I hate refusing proposals."

"Do you do it every day in the week?"

"Too often for comfort. You know that amazingly snobbish Mrs. Gotham, the railroad magnate's wife, don't you? Do you want to hear a lovely story about her? Miss Baird—my little dress-maker, who is a perfect dear—sews for this Gotham person, and last night at the dance, Mrs. Gotham said to me:

"Our dear little Miss Baird and I are *real friends*, and she *never presumes*."

Nedra concluded her yarn with one of her rare laughs, but Elmer saw nothing amusing in it.

"A mere dressmaker would have courage indeed to presume with a major general of a woman like the Gotham person!" he said.

"Don't be tiresome and miss the point! It's such a good point!"

"The only point I am interested in is—whether you'll write to me this summer."

Nedra shook her head, as she again patted her lips to hide a yawn.

"You can write to me, though."

"Of course I'll write to you! I'll

have to. Couldn't help myself. But will you *answer*?"

"I'll send you my excerpts—I think they are—on the 'Book of Judges'."

"You won't take me seriously!"

"You want me to?"

"I'm serious enough myself!"

"That's why I can't risk writing to you. I'm so shallow it gets into my letters. Does Liddy write you letters? If she does, mine, by contrast, would shock you."

"I'm past being shocked by you!"

"I dare say. It's time to go home."

She turned in the woodsy path, and they began their long walk back to the president's mansion.

"Will you give me a word of hope, Nedra? To help me over this long summer?"

"Be very definite this time—hope of what?"

"That some day, when I can come to you worthily, you will hear me."

"It sounds like a line on the movie bills in front of the Colonial! Time enough to talk of that when you do come to me 'worthily'. Only don't be too worthy, or I certainly won't 'hear' you. I don't like *very* worthy people."

Elmer stopped short in front of her in the path and frowned down upon her with a look of such compelling power in his handsome face that for an instant Nedra really looked at him with a live interest. The daring impulse came to him to seize her in his arms and kiss her lips—to attack the citadel of her coolness with the warmth of his own passion. Had he but known it, that was the only way that Nedra's coolness could have been attacked; the caution that was his watchword would never take him forward one inch with her.

But his plebeian soul cowered before what he felt to be her rare and wonderful fineness and delicacy. He felt in her presence his own inherent coarseness and clumsiness; so much so that

her very flesh seemed sacred to him, and he dared not desecrate it with his touch. He dared not brave the scorn with which he feared she would spurn such presumption.

"I want to take you into my arms and crush you, you maddening, adorable Nedra!" he declared fiercely, taking it out in words. "I wish we were not alone here! I'm afraid I shall do it!" he exclaimed, clenching his hands.

"Don't!" she said, moving back.

He relaxed limply and leaned against a tree.

"When you've recovered, let me know," she said.

"It's all right," he responded feebly, his face actually pale in the starlight. He took a step toward her, holding out his hand with a smile.

"Forgive me—and trust me!"

She ignored the hand, but resumed her walk at his side.

"I won't forgive any man for being melodramatic over me. 'Forgive me—and trust me!' she mocked him. "Don't you know that a sensible girl would rather you did take her in your arms and crush her than say to her, 'Forgive me—and trust me!' as if you were acting in a ten-twenty-third?"

"I wish," he sighed, "you'd teach me, then, how to make love to you!"

"By being yourself—even if yourself is the very devil—instead of what you think it's proper to be."

"Nedra! I want you! I want to work to win you! That is the goal I place before me—and to gain it I'll work with every drop of blood in my body! But I've got to know from you that I have a chance with you. If you think that you never can care for me, in mercy tell me so *now*!"

"When you talk straight English like that, I'll answer you as man to man. And my answer is that I like you; you interest me a little; you have rather a magnetic personality. But, so far, you are not necessary to my happiness, and

I can't at all know whether you ever will be. If you work for me, it must be at your own risk."

"At the risk that you 'trun me down' in the end?"

"That right I must certainly reserve."

"Well," said Elmer with a long, deep breath, "you're not, at least, turning me down *now*!"

His nerves tingled with an exultant pride as he felt, through all his being, the honor that was his in being given even so much as a bare chance with "this rare and radiant maiden." It was gratified ambition, rather than love, that made him so exultant. But ambition was—and love never would be—the ruling passion of Elmer's life.

When, an hour later, he entered his bedchamber and turned on the light, the first thing that confronted him was Liddy's face looking up at him from the photograph on his bureau, where he had carelessly left it that morning; for in these days he mostly kept it out of sight.

It gave him a start to-night to meet that upturned, lovely countenance, so guileless and innocent! He stood stock-still, looking down upon it, his heart beating thickly, a sense of unworthiness that irritated him stirring in the depths of his consciousness.

"But what," he asked himself, turning at last from the picture with a movement of impatience, "could Liddy expect?"

CHAPTER XXI.

According to his carefully planned policy, Elmer, for as much as three weeks before his return to Virginsburg, had not written to Liddy. He had heard from her during that time but once—a short, apologetic note, saying that she was too busy to write and would see him so soon, now, that she would save all the wonderful and lovely things she had to tell him until he came home for the summer—for of course

she assumed he *was* coming, since he had not said he wasn't. What a summer they would have!

He did not even write to her to announce his coming. Just what his course would be after he got home, he did not quite know. He would have to feel his way, of course, and avoid behaving in any manner that his conscience could not sanction. He would not deliberately jilt Liddy; not at all. That would not be necessary. She would simply come by easy steps to the realization that he had inevitably outgrown her; that the idea of his marrying her—*his* marrying *her* was his mental emphasis—had become quite absurd. Liddy was surely too reasonable not to see this and exonerate him from all blame.

But there was a circumstance that he had not reckoned with, though he had been vaguely conscious of its possibility. From the hour when he found himself in Virginsburg, his longing to fly to Liddy—to display his improved and wonderful self to her admiring eyes; to talk with her as of old about his achievements and his hopes—was well-nigh unconquerable. He even yearned to tell her all about Nedra—of her “stunning” clothes, her *distingué* manner, her gracious friendship for him by which he felt so honored. He actually suffered in the self-repression necessary to refrain from seeking out his good friend and comrade; for he was firmly resolved that, cost him what it might, he would *not* seek her out. When and where their first encounter should be must be left to chance.

That Liddy would not leave it to chance is what—at the end of a long, tedious week—Elmer began to wish very ardently. And he was sure she would not and could not. — Of course, just as soon as she knew he was home, she would try to communicate with him.

But the waiting was tiresome. It was hard enough to take up the old life

at home; to adapt himself, with his newly acquired tastes and habits, to the “common” ways, the ignorance and prejudices, of his family. But to be denied at the same time the one and only consolation he might have had in Liddy’s comparatively congenial companionship—of course not now so congenial as it once had been—was a little too much.

When ten days had gone by without a sign from her, he began to wonder whether she didn’t know he was home.

“Of course there’s no one to tell her except the Armstrongs, but surely *they* must know it.”

Twice he caught a momentary glimpse of her—or thought he did. Once, as he walked down the village street about nine o’clock at night, he saw her go up the steps of the Lutheran parsonage, which, before he could overtake her, she had entered; and again, one afternoon when the trolley to Alentown passed the farmhouse, he thought that he saw her face at a window and that she had seen him. But of neither fact was he sure. What he was sure of was that the sight of her had shaken his nerves as well as his prudent resolution. He tried to overcome his restlessness and discontent by writing to Nedra, but as he scarcely expected her to answer, there wasn’t much inspiration in that. And somehow, from the environment of his own home, he found it a labor to work off a letter to Nedra Appleton; it didn’t come easily or naturally. Letters to Liddy had never been difficult, because his relation with her had not depended upon environment.

Meantime, at the farmhouse, there was a new member of the family, with whom Elmer was having an experience. The employment of four extra men on the farm during the busy season, who had to be “eat and slep’,” necessitated extra domestic help for a few weeks, and so Minnie Doerr, the daughter of

one of the hired men, was at present living at the Wagenhorsts'. A buxom, full-bosomed country girl she was, with a high color, curly red hair, fat features, and a coarse, boisterous laugh. Before Elmer's home-coming, she had flirted either in turn or simultaneously with all of his brothers except the youngest, Johnny. But at her very first sight of Elmer in his city clothes and with his "college manners," she lost her head. Openly and, as Sally and Mrs. Wagenhorst thought, quite shamelessly, she besieged him with her company and her attentions. Mrs. Wagenhorst's mild remonstrances were unheeded. The girl seemed beside herself.

In a less crude form, Elmer was used to being besieged by girls. He had always liked it, even while scorning it. So, while Minnie Doerr repelled and disgusted him, she possessed, at the same time, a weird fascination for his senses, and her flattering, though annoying, infatuation for him soothed a bit his nervous, restless desire for Liddy. He, therefore, suffered her attentions without snubbing her too definitely.

But Minnie was not satisfied to be merely tolerated. One of the means



At sight of Liddy, Elmer, without an instant's hesitation the same instant, came

she employed to arouse in Elmer an appreciation of her charms was to tell him of her many admirers, hoping to excite his jealousy.

"You see, Elm, when a girl's had as many fellahs travel with her as what I had, a'ready," she said to him one evening, when she had joined him in the field where, by his father's orders, he was killing potato bugs, "she learns to see the diffrunce in fellahs. In the whole year that my *first* gent'man friend traveled with me, he took me



Robert Agnew

almost rushed forward, his face radiant; and she, at as eagerly to him.

only onct to the movies," counting his attentions off on her fingers, "treated me twicet to ice cream, and bought me two boxes of candy. He was all fur hisself. Why, onct when he took me fur soda water, didn't he git one glass with two straws in, yet! Yes, he was that near with his money—where my *next* friend, he couldn't do enough fur me. He used to take me on the buggy near every Sa'urday night. He'd fetch me a box of candy along near every time he come. And when he took me in town, he'd

spend as much as a couple dollars on me, yet! Yes, indeed you kin see a diffrunce at fellahs. *Don't you think?"*

"No, I don't think," retorted Elmer, moving away from her as they worked side by side in the dusk.

She laughed loud and, coming closer to him, slapped his hand.

"Well, if you ain't! Say, Elm, a girl like me does have to take a lot off of strange men. Lee' me tell you what happened me here one day last week, when I went to town to git a new suit with my wages. I was waitin' in the fittin' room, and didn't the tony floorwalker come in and begin a conversation with me, yet! He says to me, he says:

"'You're some looker, all right!' he says. It made me feel that out of place, Elm!" she said with

a virtuous air of indignation.

"*Well,*" I says to him, 'I don't take that fur a compliment, but fur an *insult*!' I says to him.

"And he says, 'Your husband must be very proud of his good-lookin' wife,' he says.

"And I says to him, 'I ain't got no husband, nor I ain't *lookin'* fur none!' That's what I tole him—nor I *ain't*, either, lookin' fur none.

"When I tell my gran'mom, still, some of the awful things I got to take

off of fellahs, she says the times is certainly changed to what they was when she was a girl. She says, why, when *she* was a girl, a fellah had to know a girl at least six months before he'd think of insultin' her like that floor-walker insulted me. But *nowadays* a fellah'll think he kin insult you the first evening he makes your acquaintance, or if you just go in a store to buy a suit and him, he never had saw you before and never had no interduction to you! Yes, a girl like me, with her mom dead this good while back, a'ready, she needs a purtecter."

"Is your father that widower, Doerr, who is working for my father just now?" asked Elmer.

"Yes, pop, he's a widower. His wife's dead. And gran'mom, she's got the softenin' of the brain. She's an awful poor soul—she's all mixed up. It makes her sich a comic talker! You ast her what fur time it is, and she'll tell you, 'August 6th!'"

Minnie roared with laughter, but Elmer did not smile.

"Say, Elm, you're awful serious, that way, ain't you?"

"Don't you know that you ought to call me 'Mr. Wagenhorst'?"

Minnie stared. There was no conception in democratic Virginsburg of a subservient relation on the part of a "hired girl" toward an employer and his family; the servant, coming often from a well-to-do farmer's family, was treated with all the consideration given to a guest and with much more than the wife or a daughter of the household ever received.

"Why, you ain't the mister, Elm!"

Elmer, not answering her, worked ahead, looking grim and forbidding.

"Say, Elm, do you *want* fur me to call you 'Mr. Wagenhorst'? I will if you want, mister. And it don't make me no diffrence, neither, if you purfer to call me 'Miss Doerr' to 'Minnie'. It's all one to me, Mr. Wagenhorst."

"But don't call me that before the rest of the family," he hastily warned her.

"Sure! They'd have a laugh on us all right if we come round with sich airs as 'Mr. Wagenhorst' and 'Miss Doerr'! Ain't?" Minnie giggled, tumbling against him with helpless laughter. "Say," she added sympathetically, "no wonder you're a grouch—a swell like you havin' to do common work like this here killin' potato bugs! There ain't none of this here thing they call 'race suicide' among potato bugs, is there, Mr. Wagenhorst?"

"Where did *you* ever hear of such a thing as race suicide?" he asked curiously, knowing she never read even a newspaper.

"Reverend Armstrong, he give a sermon onct on 'The Signs of the Times,' and this here race suicide was one of 'em."

"Race suicide a sign of the times! He must be a chump!"

"You can't prove it by me, El—Mr. Wagenhorst. Ain't it fierce the way missus runs with Liddy Fitzenberger?"

"You mean Mrs. Armstrong?"

"Yes, her. A body wouldn't think that a way-up person like reverend's missus would go with Liddy Fitzenberger, anyhow!"

"Why not?"

"Why not? Ain't you lived here all your life? Askin' why not!"

"Can't you see, Minnie, how wrong and foolish it is for people here to refuse to associate with Liddy—Liddy Fitzenberger?"

"I thought we was to say 'Miss Doerr' and 'Mr. Wagenhorst,'" she reminded him in a tone of disappointment.

Elmer, with a side glance at the girl's red hair, did not deem it prudent to demonstrate to her the true significance of his request.

"For my part," she added, ready to concede anything to gain his approval,

"I ain't got anythin' agin' Liddy Fitz-berger. I always thought it was fierce the way the folks wouldn't associate with her."

"No, you didn't think anything of the kind."

"Ach, El—Mr. Wagenhorst—I did, too, then! If you ain't!"

Elmer was constantly obliged, as they worked together, to edge away from her, so persistently did she keep pushing against him.

"And a girl like this," he reflected, "my father would approve as a wife for any one of his sons—even for me—while Liddy, with her fine feelings and gentle ways, he would think a disgrace and a shame!"

"Did you take notice, a'ready, Mr. Wagenhorst," said Minnie, "how jealous your brother Sam has—on account of me and you bein' so thick? He's awful gone on me! I can't seem to discourage him any! It bothers me somepin fierce."

"He has no reason to be jealous of me."

"Yes, he has, too! He sees I favor you, anyhow, more'n I do *him*! You kin see it yourself," she added, again playfully slapping his hand, "if you're got an eye in your head!"

It was at this moment that they caught the sound of footsteps and rustling skirts coming toward them across the fields, and soon a feminine form emerged from out the dusk and approached them.

"It's your sister Sally! My, but she has jealous of all her brothers! If I'm alone with any one of yours for five minutes, she's after me! What's the matter of her? They got to git married sometime!"

"The company's come," Sally curtly announced to the girl, "and mom wants you to go on in and lay over the bread fur her. Pop don't hire you to help the men in the fields, but to help me

and mom with the exter housework while the hired men is here."

"And if here don't come your Sammy after me, too!" Minnie laughed boisterously. "What do you know about that? They're afraid of what I might do to you, Elm! Hello, Sammy!" she yelled. "Come on!"

Sammy, a stalwart youth four years younger than Elmer, joining them from another direction, spoke as curtly to Elmer as Sally had spoken to Minnie.

"Pop says you worked enough. You're to come on in and see the comp'ny—Uncle Sam and Aunt Sue."

"All right!" loudly announced Minnie. "Come on, Elm! Let's I and you walk ahead of she and him."

And, hooking her arm through Elmer's, she started to walk at his side. But Sammy, in spite of the awe that he, in common with his other brothers, felt before Elmer, protested fiercely.

"I knew Min Doerr before you did, Elmer Wagenhorst, and I ain't leavin' you cut me out if you *are* a college grad'yate! She's my girl and I'm walkin' with her!"

"For Heaven's sake, Sam, *take* her!" Elmer laughed, shaking the girl off and striding to Sally's side.

Sammy seized Minnie's arm and held her back from hastening after his brother.

"Ain't she the bold piece?" muttered Sally indignantly, as she and Elmer hurried ahead through the darkness. "The wery idea of her thinkin' herself good enough to make up to *you*, yet!"

Elmer found Sally's exalted idea of him, in the new personality he had acquired during his absence, very agreeable.

"She makes me tired," Sally continued to scold, "the way she's always tellin' how the fellahs are after her! Would you believe it, Elmer, she'll count her beaus off on her fingers to me and mom, and she'll fetch the silliest giggle over it! Why, if a fellah just

took her oncet on his buggy, she'd count him a beau! I think, Elmer, it's the poorness of her mind. She ain't bright."

"Don't let her bother you, Sally," said Elmer kindly. "I know how to keep her in her place."

"Well, I guess, anyhow, *you* kin! But our other boys she has just where she wants 'em."

"Did grandfather come with Aunt Sue and Uncle Sammy?"

"No, so I'm glad we kilt only three chickens instead of four. With four, we'd have dragged along so many days warmin' over and warmin' over, before we'd have got 'em eat, ain't?"

"It's not a very convenient time for visitors, is it?" Elmer asked sympathetically.

"No, it's so spiteful that they come when we're got the hired men to sleep and eat. We ain't got the time to set and wisit with 'em. Mom tole 'em, 'Now just make yourselves contented. We got to go right on with the work.' And Aunt Sue, she said she knowed it wasn't a handy time to wisit, but she just couldn't set at home no longer, it was so long since she'd went anywheres. She's near seventy-five—I think she needn't be so restless at that age! But she says, 'Indeed, Sally, if I ain't so young any more, I do anyhow like to get excited. I can't stand it when there ain't nothin' to get excited over. Yes, I like it lively,' she says, 'if I *am* near seventy-five. I guess I ain't natured accordin' to my years,' she says. And pop he says to her, 'You certainly ain't!'"

Neither the gentle disapproval of Mrs. Wagenhorst, the scornful indignation of Sally, the jealousy of Sam, nor Elmer's coldness, could check Minnie's ardent admiration and persistent besieging, at every least opportunity, of such "a perfect gentleman" as she considered the eldest son of the household. While she did not neglect her

work—Mr. Wagenhorst was not the man to pay out wages for value not received—she never missed a chance to be alone with Elmer, following him to the spring house, to the fields, to the orchard, even to the door of his room.

"If I had never known another kind of girl, wouldn't I despise the sex?" Elmer often thought these days, even while his nerves were wracked with that weird fascination which Minnie's constant presence provoked and his egotism flattered by her preference for him above his brothers.

"When I do get to see Liddy," he told himself, "Minnie will be bound to discover it, the way she follows and watches me! And it won't take her two minutes to carry the news to the old man!"

But when he did at last, one day, suddenly and unexpectedly come face to face with Liddy, he had been home two weeks.

CHAPTER XXII.

It was in the post office one evening at half past six o'clock. Liddy had just turned from mailing a letter to ask for her own mail at the postmaster's window—the post office being merely a set-off in Sweitzer's General Store—when she was checked in the act by the sudden appearance of Elmer.

There were a few loafers sitting about on cracker boxes and pickle barrels, and the proprietor of the store, old John Sweitzer, who was also the postmaster, stood behind his window.

At sight of Liddy, Elmer, without an instant's hesitation, almost rushed forward, his face radiant; and she, at the same instant, came as eagerly to him.

"Liddy!"

"Elmer!"

They clasped hands, he unable to repress or hide the happiness that flooded his being at sight of her, and she



"You still feel, Mr. Wagenhorst," Mr. Armstrong deliberately inquired, "that you are obliged to see Liddy secretly?"

scarcely less joyful, though a little more serene in her expression of her pleasure.

He at once felt, rather than saw, the great change in her—her tasteful clothing, her new expression of radiance and confidence, her erect carriage of herself. All these things, which he had seen more than a year and a half ago in his short Christmas vacation and promptly forgotten, he now saw much more clearly; for not only were they far more noticeable, but his own sense of externals was very much more developed. Had it not been for his preconceived idea of Liddy as the same provincial girl he had known all his life, he would now have seen her as having nothing provincial about her and as set apart and above all the other native inhabitants of Virginsburg. It was not thus, however, that he did see her, but only as very creditably improved in appearance, dress, and manner.

"When did you get home, Elmer?"

she asked quickly in a low voice, as they stood together by the post-office window.

"Didn't you *know* I was home, Liddy? I've been home two weeks!"

"Two weeks! Oh, Elmer! But you must forgive me for not writing," she said hurriedly, vaguely. "I've been so busy and absorbed! Oh, I know I must have been very unsatisfactory to you lately! Two weeks you have been home?" she repeated, as if trying to take in such a surprising fact. "Why, I believe I must, then, have sent a letter to Collegeville since you were home!"

"Yes, it was forwarded to me here."

"But I'll make up to you, Elmer, for my neglect. Forgive me and bear with me! You will, when I tell you that wonderful news I wrote you I was saving for you!"

"But you did tell me *after all*—don't you remember? About the baby named

after you. Does it absorb you so much?"

"The baby? You thought *that* was my great news? Oh, no, it isn't that! When and where can we meet, Elmer? At the parsonage?"

"Yes, anywhere! Can we meet there this evening, Liddy? I'm so crazy—I've been wanting so very much to see you," he prudently modified his enthusiasm.

"Let me see." She considered it. "Well, yes, I suppose I can see you at the parsonage this evening. I'll try to."

"I'll be there by eight o'clock," he promptly stated, feeling, now, the curious eyes of the occupants of the store upon them.

He turned rather hastily to ask for his mail. When he had received it, Liddy held up her hand to the window for hers.

"Oh!" interposed Elmer. "I beg your pardon! I didn't know you wanted your mail. Mr. Sweitzer," he quickly addressed the postmaster, "Miss Fitz-berger's mail, please."

Liddy, unused to anything like gallantry from him, rested her eyes upon him with a look of appraising him anew.

John Sweitzer, with a solemn wink in the direction of the loafers on the boxes and barrels over the joke of Elmer Wagenhorst's "college airs"—calling Liddy Fitz-berger "Miss Fitz-berger" and "*begging* her pardon"—shuffled his letters and handed out two. Elmer, as he passed them to Liddy, caught the postmark "Maine" on one of them and "New York" on the other. He hardly had time to wonder over the surprising fact of Liddy's getting letters from Maine and New York, when she, looking more eager and excited at sight of the letters than she had at the sudden sight of him, nervously dropped one of them, and as Elmer picked it up and gave it to her, he was struck by the handwriting of the address—

it seemed familiar to him. Liddy's face was flushed and her eyes brilliant as she again took her letters from his hand.

"Good-by, Elmer," she said quickly, turning to the door.

But he hurried after her.

"At eight o'clock, then, Liddy?" he whispered, close at her side.

"Eight o'clock? Oh, you mean at the parsonage? I'll *try* to be there. Good-by, Elmer—*dear!*" she whispered back—and was gone.

He watched her as she hurried across the street to her home. He saw that she did not turn at her gate to look back for one more glimpse of him.

Slowly he walked up the street toward the farm, thinking how long the hour would be that must pass before he could join her again at eight o'clock. How pretty she was in her white dress and broad white hat, without a spot of color about her except the brown of her eyes and hair!

Presently he began to wonder what was the cause of the vague sense of dissatisfaction that rankled in him over the encounter he had just had with Liddy. He could not quite lay hold of it. Of course John Sweitzer and those other loafers in the store would talk all over the village about his friendly chatting with her, but he was not seriously concerned about that. It was something about *her*—what was it? She had certainly been as sweet and lovely as ever. And that voice of hers!

"It's really a *cultivated* voice!" he realized suddenly, with a shock of surprise. "Liddy has the making of a perfect lady in her, I do believe!"

By the time he reached the farm, he had decided that it was an impression he had got of an aloofness on Liddy's part toward him that was rankling in him so uncomfortably—a lack of the admiring deference he had come to look for from every one since his return home.

"Of course I couldn't expect her to see all in a minute that I am not just what I was eighteen months ago. And yet surely she must understand that while she has been stopping right here where I left her, I have been *going on*! If she doesn't see it, it's going to make it harder for me to let her in for the knowledge that I don't look upon our agreement of eighteen months ago as standing *now*. However," he comforted himself, "as soon as she has seen a little more of me, she *will* see and understand. That's why I really must see something of her—so that she will just naturally recognize the inevitable."

There kept strangely recurring to his mind the handwriting of the address on the envelope he had handed to Liddy. He felt sure that he had seen it before, but he could not account for the impression.

"I'll ask her about it," he decided.

Somewhat before eight o'clock, he was ringing the bell at the Lutheran parsonage.

The negro maid who answered his ring had long since discarded the use of a card plate, so she looked almost alarmed when Elmer handed her his card, the very first one she had seen in Virginsburg.

He recalled, as he sat in the Armstrongs' tastefully furnished little parlor, how the first time Liddy had asked him to spend an evening here, he had refused because of his secret fear that people such as he had been led to suppose these Armstrongs were would find him crude and provincial. He smiled to himself as he realized how far he had left any such misgivings behind him. He felt, now, complacently patronizing toward a petty village sky pilot. He himself would some day be so much more than that.

Yet, when Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong came into the room—the latter looking quite matronly, now, both in figure and

countenance—he felt at once that these people were in truth what he called "the real thing". It was unmistakable that they were of genuinely gentle breeding. It did not, however, occur to him, as it would have at once to a woman, that Liddy, through all these many months of closest intimacy in this household, could not have stood still, but must, like himself, have "gone on."

"I've taken the liberty of coming here to meet Liddy, if you will be so good as to allow me," he explained, when formal greetings had been exchanged and they were all comfortably seated.

"You have arranged with Liddy to meet her here this evening?" asked Mrs. Armstrong in surprise. "She didn't tell us."

"I met her in the post office at half past six, and she asked me to meet her here at eight o'clock. I hope it isn't presuming too much upon your goodness?"

"Oh, no, no. Liddy is quite a member of our family, the dear!"

"Her devotion to Mrs. Armstrong," the minister added with feeling, "has meant so much to us during the past year."

"It was worth coming to Virginsburg to have found Liddy!" said Mrs. Armstrong fervently.

"I dare say," Elmer gravely acquiesced.

He had a horrified suspicion that the Armstrongs were politely repressing a feeling of actual amusement at the transformation they saw in him—the contrast between the raw material he must have seemed to them at that one and only time they had met him and the finished product he now was, with his perfect accent, his irreproachable diction, his ease and grace of manner, his faultless clothing. Yes, no doubt they thought it funny!

"How does it happen that Liddy didn't know until this evening that I

was home," he asked, "since *you* of course knew it?"

"Oh," exclaimed Mrs. Armstrong, again much surprised, "didn't she *know* you were home? Why, we supposed of course she did know—that *you*, naturally, had let her know—and we've been wondering and *wondering* why she didn't speak of it. Of course, when she didn't broach the subject, *we* didn't feel free to. Liddy has her reticences!"

"I had neglected to write to her of my coming—and then, after I got here, I didn't happen to see her until to-night," said Elmer quite easily. It had just occurred to him that his coming here to the parsonage to see Liddy might commit him, in the eyes of the Armstrongs, to his supposed betrothal.

"It was very pleasant to see her again," he remarked in a matter-of-fact, quite unsentimental tone of voice. "She's looking very well."

"She certainly is. She has reason to look well—dear Liddy!" said Mrs. Armstrong enthusiastically. "We're so proud of her! We're——"

She stopped short at the swift glance of warning that Elmer distinctly saw her husband send her across the room.

"You still feel, Mr. Wagenhorst," Mr. Armstrong deliberately inquired, "that you are obliged to see Liddy secretly?"

"Isn't it absurd?" Elmer said, flushing. "But of course the circumstances that have always made secrecy necessary still exist. My father would not tolerate my friendship with Liddy, and until I'm financially independent of him, I've got to walk the chalk line!"

He saw how Mrs. Armstrong's eyes dilated at his speaking of his "friendship" for Liddy instead of his "engagement".

"I'm glad I got that in!" he thought.

"It puzzles me, Mrs. Armstrong," he said, changing the subject abruptly, "how two people like you and your hus-

band endure Virginsburg. I'm finding it pretty awful this summer."

"There's more interest and excitement to the square inch in Virginsburg than in any other town on the map, I'm sure!" declared Mrs. Armstrong. "Where else would we have two-thirds of a community harping for two years on the '*insult*' offered them by their own minister's trying to 'uplift' them and calling them 'cattle' and 'common stock'? In what other town, I ask you, would plain, everyday people like us stand out as luridly worldly plutocrats? And where else on earth would you discover a romance like Liddy's?"

Elmer's flush deepened. He saw, now, that he ought not to have come here where his engagement was so taken for granted that they referred openly to Liddy's "romance" with him. Very romantic, indeed, in their eyes, that simple little Liddy should be engaged to a man who had gone through college with such honors as he had and who promised to be such a success! But he'd have to set them straight.

"Liddy's romance? Is little Liddy having a romance?"

"Mrs. Armstrong refers," said the minister hastily, "to the tragic story of her family in this village and their ostracism. For what time did you make your appointment with Liddy, Mr. Wagenhorst, may I ask?"

Elmer drew out his watch.

"For eight o'clock. Why, it's half past! I'm detaining you!" he apologized. "I wonder why Liddy doesn't come!"

"We're not surprised at anything Liddy does these days, she's so moony and absent-minded! She's probably forgotten by this time that she told you she'd be here."

"Forgotten! Oh, but she couldn't have forgotten! How could she forget such a thing——"

He bit his lip and was silent.

Mrs. Armstrong shook her head hopelessly over Liddy's delinquencies.

"She acts these days, Mr. Wagenhorst, as if she were in love!"

"I sincerely hope she is!" Elmer smiled. "That is," he quickly added, "I hope she isn't. It's an extremely uncomfortable state of mind!"

"Do you find it so?"

"In the days of my callow youth, when I used never to be *out* of love, I certainly did find it disquieting! By the way," he added, again diverting the subject, "how's the wonderful baby I've been hearing about?"

"Doing fairly well, considering that her mother's a suffragist and sometimes leaves her to the care of an idolatrous negro mammy," said Mr. Armstrong. "A well-trained child, ours; she wakes me every morning at four a. m., howling, 'Votes for Women!' though Mrs. Armstrong says she's screeching, 'I want my breakfast!' She has all of

her mother's vanity and none of her father's modesty. A fearful child!"

"As Liddy is her adopted aunt, you'll have to be her uncle, Mr. Wagenhorst," smiled the baby's proud mother, with the air of conferring knighthood.

"I'm scarcely entitled to the honor," protested Elmer, looking very uncomfortable. "Do you adopt aunts and uncles so promiscuously as that?"

"By no means! It's only because of Liddy that *you* are so honored, I assure you!" Mrs. Armstrong retorted.

It was just here that the sound of a light step in the hall made Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong rise simultaneously.

"Here's Liddy. We'll run away and leave you alone," said Mr. Armstrong. "I have a sick call to pay, and Mrs. Armstrong has some suffrage correspondence to attend to. So you'll excuse us, please, won't you?"

They left by the dining room as Liddy came in from the hall.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE AUGUST NUMBER.

THE CALENDAR

FAIR, sunny skies?

Not so, I say.

Though roses rare,

And fields a-bloom

And birds a-lilt

Proclaim it June,

'Tis I know better.

You are not here!

'Tis wind-wild, sullen,

Sad November!

Cold, leaden skies?

How false again!

Though tempests shriek,

The fields are bare,

And birds have left

For lands more fair,

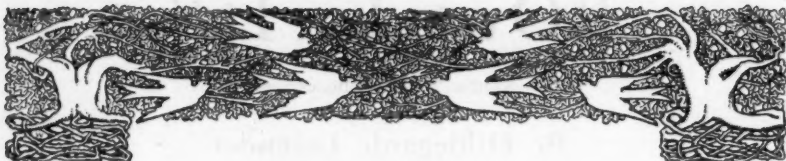
Yet I know better.

For you are here!

How fair, how sweet,

This Junetime weather!

STELLA E. SAXTON.



Prairie

By Jeannie Pendleton Hall

WEARY of hewing mountain steeps
And buttes of craggy side,
Of boring cañon deeps—oh, deeps!—
Washed by a thin, sharp tide,
The Great Mind worked in quiet vein
And planned a gentler thing—the plain.

Not painted, like the desert floor,
Nor choked with limy dust
And gray, unwatered shrubs of sore,
Hard growth, since grow they must,
A thing apart, vast, proud, and shy,
The prairie spreads to meet the sky.

Rocking its myriad flowers—enlaced
Mile upon golden mile,
It strows its green as kings might waste
Their emeralds once a while,
With far, far rims, as blue as they
That loop fair waters leagues away.

Man might not spare a thing so fine.
The huge plows bite the sod;
Trains yelp along their glistening line
Where rough-clad ponies trod.
But still there rolls some chartless sea
Where only birds and wild flowers be.

Leave us so much, O restless heart
Of progress! Leave a tithe
Of this wide wonder, set apart
To grasses bending lithe,
To unstopped breezes! Spare a while
The yellow marvel, mile on mile!



"Out In It"

Another Tea-Table Discussion

By Hildegarde Lavender

Author of "Husbands as Conversational Assets," "Leaks," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

THE doctor came stamping into the hall from the miry street. A thick fog hung outside the windows; one could not see the houses across the way, but merely had a vague impression of dark piles bulking through impenetrable mist. It was a chilly mist, too, for the time of year, and the tea-table group was huddled close to the fire. The hostess ran into the hall to help the maid take off the doctor's mackintosh, on which the blanketing fog had crystallized into drops of water.

"You brave thing!" cried the enthusiastic hostess. "You came afoot! Every one else came in a closed cab—or else stayed at home. Most of them stayed at home. Grandmother telephoned that she couldn't bear to venture out. And Madame Cræsus thought it would be a crime to put the horses between shafts on a day like this, and she's grown such a coward about motors since that ugly skidding accident in November that she wouldn't take a taxi. But nothing daunts you, does it? Come in and get warm by the fire."

"I'm not cold," said the doctor, shaking her head to knock the moisture off her third best walking hat. "I walked down from the office, and exercise always warms you, if you're halfway healthy and halfway properly dressed."

The débutante was standing with her nose glued to the windowpane

looking out into the sickly fog that almost aped London style in its dirty, drabbish-brown color. It was a particularly disheartening view.

"If you'll keep me all night," she said to the hostess, turning away from the window, "I think I'll telephone home that I'll stay. It's simply too vile to go out into—that afternoon out there, all mud and cold and drip and drizzle and smotherly mist."

While the hospitable hostess replied that she would love to keep the débutante all night, the doctor was remarking:

"You came down in Casey's cab, that's evident. You haven't really been out in it. It isn't half so bad when you really get into it." She took her cup of tea and stirred it meditatively. "Have you ever noticed," she added, "that the most evil-minded weather bureau never yet succeeded in giving the world a day so unpleasant that it wasn't endurable once one got out into it?"

"What makes those unpleasant days bearable," said the hostess with decision, "is the power to avoid being out in them. They're dreadful even in the house, of course—depressing, enervating; they put one out of gear with the world, and make one rather a bear to one's family. Still, I think that as long as one can stay in the house and simply look at them through the windows, one can endure them."

"And I'm coming to just the opposite conclusion," declared the doctor,



"You brave thing!" cried the enthusiastic hostess. "You came afoot
Every one else came in a closed cab—or else stayed at home."

passing over her cup for more tea. "It's only when one stays on the inside of the window and surveys the disagreeable world from that alleged point of vantage that it seems too disagreeable to be borne. Get out in it, and it's always endurable. Indeed, I'm coming to the conclusion that to get out in the midst of things—disagreeable things—dreadful things—is the only way in which it is possible to bear them. I assure you that all of you, housed and sheltered, have suffered more from to-day than I have, tramping down here through two miles of it; you've been

more painfully affected by it than all the men who have been obliged to get out into the midst of it. You're all on the wrong side of the window."

"It sounds as if you were treating us to a parable," remarked the debutante, somewhat flippantly.

"I suppose that is what it is," the doctor agreed serenely. "But it is also the literal truth. Don't you all know that when there have been spells of bad weather—rain or snow or fog or gale—and you have stayed in the house glowering at the prospect outside and wishing that it would change and declaring that it was really too bad to go out in—don't you all know how painfully your tempers and

your healths and your dispositions have reacted to the situation? But when you've grown desperate, and have put on your galoshes and your waterproofs and tied veils over your heads and have gone out into it, it has suddenly assumed a different aspect. You have accepted the conflict—that's what it really means, I suppose. You are no longer dodging and evading the truth. And forthwith your spirits rise and your blood begins to flow more freely and warmly in your veins, and behold, after half an hour's buffeting with whatever sort of storm Providence has thrust

upon you that day, you come back a changed person. What you say then is that the day isn't so bad, after all; but what has really happened is that you aren't so bad, after all. The day hasn't changed, but you've gotten out into it. You've found it endurable; that is, you've found in yourself the strength to withstand it. Psychologically as well as physically you've benefited. And instead of being your enemy, the day becomes your friend.

"The people who have stayed in the house," she went on, before the silent group could attack her optimism, "sympathize with you, just as our kind hostess, here, sympathized with me a few minutes ago. They help you off with your overshoes, they push an easy-chair up to the fire, they adjust the door so that the draft will not strike you, and they coo and murmur over you with many a pleasant little 'Poor thing, you must be frozen!' or, 'You must be half drowned!' And all the time it is you who have had the best of the day by going out into it. You bring an appetite to dinner that evening which the housebound ones do not have. They are finicky—the roast beef isn't as tender as usual, the potatoes aren't well browned, there's too much vinegar in the salad dressing, and Nora's going off frightfully on her deserts. But as for you, who breasted the storm, you find the roast beef perfectly tender, and the salad has just the right tang of bitter for your taste, and you enjoy your dinner.

"You enjoy the hour before the fire after dinner. The housebound ones yawn; they are grumpy; they discover that there is nothing in the house that they want to read, nothing in the house to hear played. No, they don't want a game of piquet, they don't want five hundred—they played those all the afternoon until they are sick of them! They trail off to bed an hour earlier than usual because they are too bored

to sit up longer; yet as they go, they utter sad prophecies of sleeplessness. And probably the prophecies are fulfilled. All because they haven't been out in the weather, which really wasn't very bad when one braved it, but only if one merely surveyed it from the wrong side of the windowpane.

"Sometimes," went on the doctor, "I think it is so with all the things that look unbearable when we survey them from the sheltered side of the window. Of course, there are conditions in the world that do prove unbearable. I suppose every death proves that some disease has been unbearable to some person. I suppose every suicide proves that the conditions of the world have been unbearable to some tired or warped mind. I suppose that every poor derelict, creeping up to one as one walks the street and begging for a dime, is proof that society has been too much for him. But, if we don't take the ultimate cases, if we don't consider the sicknesses that finally prove fatal, the temptations that finally spell ruin, the poverty that means defeat—if we take anything this side of final catastrophe—how much more easily things are borne when one is in them than when one stands on the inside of the window and shrinks from them!

"Poverty, I suppose, looks unbearable to the securely prosperous, when they survey it from the vantage ground of their stocks and bonds, their real-estate parcels, their savings-bank accounts, and all the rest of it. But poverty is no more unbearable than a spell of bad weather if one is used to it, or if one meets it squarely. I've seen men and women who were selfish, querulous, and inefficient under the stultification of prosperity grow into quite vigorous, kindly, active human beings under the beneficent rule of poverty—but only after they had made up their minds to meet it!

"There was one of my patients whose

husband had a bad failure, and who put in two months of moaning that she couldn't bear it, she couldn't bear it! She had always been a pampered individual, and the ailments for which I treated her were largely induced by idleness; I used to tell her so, and used to prescribe all the polite, make-believe activities that save our medical faces for us so often—gymnastics, philanthropies, and what not. But she would never persist in them; she wasn't obliged to be active and she wouldn't be. She would try gymnastics for a fortnight, and philanthropies for two afternoons, and then would go back to her beloved ailments.

"Well, after her husband's failure, she moaned, as I have said, for two months that she couldn't bear it. And kind friends wanted to spare her the awful bearing of it. Brothers offered her shelter in homes of the same sort to which she had been accustomed; a father offered her a very decent allowance, which her husband, fortunately, would not permit her to accept. Well, at the end of the two months she had to get up out of her four-poster because it was going to be sold along with the house and all its contents. And as she had a remnant of a heart, she couldn't quite make up her mind to desert her husband and to accept any of the places-on-the-inside-of-the-window that had been offered to her; so there was nothing for it but for her to go out on the outside of the window with him.

"It wasn't any glorified apartment that they were able to afford—they went into a tenement. There were none of those faithful retainers of the Southern-novel type beseeching the privilege of serving them for nothing. Their most ancient retainer had been with them about seven months, and had collected her wages and flitted the day that the failure was published in the papers. My patient had to do her own work, if it was to be done at all. She's

cured. I don't see her professionally any longer. But I go there to dinner sometimes—they've gone up one grade and live in a flat now, instead of in the tenement—and I fill my eyes and my mind with the picture of how much good it does one to get out into the worst that is waiting for one. That woman is active, robust, merry, and happy; she has met poverty squarely, and she finds that it's not nearly the bugaboo it looked from the other side of the window.

"I've even seen what we call disgrace turn into something beneficent when it was met face to face without pretext," pursued the doctor gravely. "It was always threatening the household of which I am thinking, for there was a weak lad in the house—an overindulged, underdisciplined boy. You know—the sort of boy who isn't made to go to school very regularly in his early period, who stays home for a day whenever he is able to conjure up a sore throat, who stays out for a week whenever his mother wishes to prolong her vacation at the seashore beyond the school-opening time.

"Well, he grew up into the sort of young man that overindulgence and underdiscipline is likely to produce—not exactly vicious, but awfully weak, awfully fond of pleasure, awfully indiscriminating as to what constitutes pleasure. He had some sort of a polite position in a brokerage firm down on Wall Street, to begin with. But pretty soon he had another position, and his father and mother were looking a little strained and pale. And pretty soon he had still another position, and his mother gave up Palm Beach that winter. And then one heard that he wasn't reliable, and that if it weren't for his father's position and influence and his father's willingness to pay in order to hush things up, this irregularity or that would have landed him in court. You could see, if you knew the family, with



"She had to get up out of her four-poster because it was going to be sold along with the house and all its contents."

just what horror those two older people were looking out through their glass windows upon the possibility outside—disgrace.

"I suppose every one of us who has been decently brought up and who has a decent family name shrinks from the thought of that more than from any other thought in the world. Poverty would be nothing, sickness would be nothing, death itself would be nothing—but oh, the anguish of having it discovered that either we or those whom we love have not been playing the game according to the accepted rules of our set! That was the way it was with my friends. That was the one thing they thought not to be borne.

"And then one day, when the boy's

dereliction had been graver than usual, the father, instead of promising immediately to make it good provided only that the matter was hushed up, came home to consult with his wife. He suggested that sooner or later the lad's courses would lead him into open and irretrievable shame, unless they, the parents, would face the issue squarely now. Suppose, said the father, they should make the boy take his medicine this time, let the family endure a certain measure of publicity; perhaps by this valorous course, something might yet be done to save the boy's life from permanent ruin.

"I suppose the unhappy mother, staring at that fearful figure of obloquy through her curtained windows, had her time of believing that she could not face it. But finally she capitulated. The boy was told that this time he had to make good his own transgression. There was a scandal, of course, but the people who were in it found that not even scandal is quite the unendurable thing they had imagined. They found—and this was the most important discovery—that a quality had been aroused in their son which might make for his regeneration and which never could have been aroused while all his offenses were condoned, all his shortcomings hidden. They found, too, that the world, whose judgment they had thought so impossible to bear, was a kindlier world than they had had reason to dream it. Some stupid, well-meaning people openly offered them sympathy; others, wiser and quite as well meaning, simply proceeded to treat them as they always had treated them; and it was only a negligible and contemptible portion of their circle of acquaintance that affected to find their position questionable. The whole storm was so much easier to bear when they were out in it than when they had watched its approach from the curtained side of the window.

"Sometimes," the doctor went on gravely, "it seems to me that those of us who have lived in wool-padded comfort all our lives are going to go out of the world ignorant of the very meaning of existence. Hard work, sickness, poverty, disappointment, war, despair—these, we all see as we look around us, are the conditions upon which the world is given to men; and yet we are all busily engaged in trying to build up barriers between ourselves and those conditions of reality. Some of us succeed to a certain degree. Some very rich women, for example, never touch reality even by riding in a street car;

all their lives long they step into upholstered carriages and are borne from one pleasant abode to another. And all the girls riding in the street cars and walking along the streets envy them. Sometimes I ask myself for what do we of the footpaths and the crowds envy them. After all, it is nothing but their lack of experience—it is nothing but their exemption from life. And yet no one would dare to say that she wished to live without experiencing life! What do those people who have never felt the primal necessity to labor know about the world in which they live? They might as well go through life with a bandage over their eyes and cotton wool in their ears. Spiritually, it sometimes seems to me that they are like that wonderful woman, Helen Keller, as she was before she became a wonderful woman by overcoming the congenital tragedies. Nature deprived her of so many avenues of approach to life, of so many means of intercourse with the world and her kind; and she, by sheer, indomitable intellect and will, overcame all these dreadful inhibitions. But the inhibitions placed upon the children of wealth, the children of the aristocracies—what awful cataclysms are required to bring them into the stream of life, to teach them what it means to be merely a human being! A San Francisco earthquake, a *Titanic* disaster, a world war—these are needed to teach men something of the meaning of life before they die!"

The doctor suddenly put down her cup upon the stand and looked at her awe-struck audience.

"I've been monologuing horribly! Why didn't some one throw something at me?" she demanded.

"We were interested," replied the hostess in a voice of sincerity. But the débutante only said:

"I'm not going to stay all night. I'm going to walk home with the doctor. I'm going to get out into the weather."

The Noblest Roman

By Mary Brent Whiteside

ILLUSTRATED BY DAN SAYRE GROESBECK

Do you know what "an unspeakable tragedy it is to go through life being one thing with your hands—when all the time your soul wants to be something else?" Tommy Gwynne came into a spectacular fortune, and helped a lot of brainless imbeciles to "find themselves," in one of the most unusual and amusing stories we have ever published.

I HAD the tidings from "Spunk" Carson. As I crossed the campus from the Philosophy Building, I saw him skid perilously for a second on one of the ice-incrusted steps in front of the university library. Then he cleared the rest of the flight at a bound, and gained the safer level above.

"'Lo, Babe! Whadd'ye think?" he challenged me, with a cheerfulness that, under the circumstances, was rather indecorous. "Old Money Bags has ditched his last train. The Noblest Roman had a long distance, and beats it on the eleven-ten."

At the time I was halfway through my senior year, and was specializing in English, but the single monosyllable that occurred to me as adequate to the occasion was "Gosh!" Spunk looked at me expectantly, and, unable to think of anything else, I said, "Gosh!" over again.

"Does queer you for a minute, don't it?" Spunk observed. "Whadd'ye s'pose the kid'll do?"

"Do?" I echoed, finding my tongue. "It's what he'll undo that's got me guessing. If he lives long enough, he can mess up the map of both hemispheres and start on the solar system."

Spunk grinned appreciatively.

"Right-o!" he agreed. "All he needs is a side partner. Gwynne and Carson! Lord! We'd annex Mars inside the next decade, and have Mercury and Jupiter doubling their coast defenses."

Now, Spunk's vernacular, in the comprehensible prose of ordinary speech, concerned the sudden demise of one Jonathan Bunt, capitalist, disrespectfully alluded to as "old Money Bags." In consequence of this event, his nephew, Thomas Gwynne—known to his intimates as "the Noblest Roman," on account of having what we conceived to be curiously antique and un-American standards—would now come into his own—that is, into one of the most spectacular fortunes of America.

The thought of it was like the effect of high altitudes on certain constitutions. It made all of us light-headed, except Tommy Gwynne himself. The Noblest Roman, indeed, returned from his uncle's funeral and rounded out his last term with the same imperturbable gravity that had marked his demeanor as a freshman. Tommy had always taken life with prodigious seriousness, and, believing himself interested in psychology, had spent his four years at college acquiring a mass of uncorrelated, frequently erroneous, information on the subject that would have scandalized his instructors, had they been aware of it.

A week before graduation, Tommy offered me a position which he called a "confidential secretaryship," at a salary with which my experience was so incommensurate that pride forced me to urge his cutting it in half.

Tommy blinked at me wonderingly



"I'm not conducting a business," Tommy retorted. "I'm establishing—er—well, you might call it a sort of philanthropic commonwealth."

with his sober, nearsighted gray eyes, when I made my request.

"Why, I'll pay you whatever you like," he conceded graciously. "I'd just as lief pay you only a thousand a year, if you think that's all you're worth. You ought to know, and it's only a mental attitude, anyway."

Tommy had a disconcerting little habit of classifying everything, from a war in the Balkans to an overdone beefsteak, as a "mental attitude".

Somewhat, his readiness to accept my

own modest valuation of my services was not flattering. I hastened to change the subject.

"Anyway, give me a tip," I urged. "What's my stunt, exactly? Do I stand guard in an anteroom, all slickish mahogany and leather, and play watchdog? Or do I help you gobble up big railroads and make mud pies out of little ones?"

Tommy took off his thick, round glasses, and wiped them carefully. He always did it with a kind of crushing dignity that made me feel as dismal as I used to in infancy, when I was conscious of having said the wrong thing during a visit from the minister.

"I haven't the slightest idea what you are going to do," he confessed presently. "but I must admit that both your guesses seem to me

not only singularly irrelevant, but perfectly ridiculous. What do you think I'm going to do?" he added significantly.

A fleeting vision recurred to me—Spunk Carson skidding precariously on an icy step and announcing, in his own picturesque idiom, the death of "old Money Bags."

"Annex Mars," I ventured hopefully.

Tommy did not even smile. Where there should have been a bump of hu-

mor, his head showed the most abnormal concavity ever known to phrenology.

"I'm planning to establish a bureau," he asserted, with profound seriousness, "for the purpose of giving to every worthy applicant just the thing on this earth that he desires most."

I had gotten out of my chair.

"Oh, my Lord!" I gasped, and sat down again, feeling too weak to stand. "That's some proposition, right enough! By thunder, it makes the conquest of Mars look as easy as a kissing game at a kid's party!"

"Well," returned Tommy complacently, "I've made a beginning, at any rate, by promising you whatever salary you want." And he shot a triumphant glance at me through his round glasses.

The logic of this was irrefutable.

"But I can't classify you," I persisted lamely. "My word for it, I don't know whether I'm listening to a wild extravaganza or a problem play! You've got the punch, right enough, but I can't figure out whether you're Gilbert and Sullivan, or Ibsen and Galsworthy rolled together."

Tommy denied both allegations.

"I don't call myself any sort of names," he protested mildly. "I'm not even a socialist. At least, I don't think I'm a socialist," he added conscientiously, "because I'm not sure what a socialist is. Anyway, it's an attitude of mind, and I don't think I have it."

"May I ask when work begins?" I ventured, feeling rather at a loss. "I figure that I'll start my young life just about thirteen dollars and twenty cents to the good——"

"Next week," Tommy interrupted me. "And I'll advance you a year's salary."

"That's not business," I objected.

"I'm not conducting a business," Tommy retorted. "I'm establishing——er——well, you might call it a sort of

philanthropic commonwealth. Its basic law will be a carefully developed scheme of compensation. It will be a place where men and women can follow the vocations that appeal to them most, whether they bring financial returns or not. Worldly considerations will not enter there. My people will be chosen from among the multitudes who have been starved all their lives—that is, whose—whose aspirations have been starved——"

"Oh, aspirations!" I assented eagerly. "Now I'm getting you! Aspirations!" I fairly caressed the word. It, at least, was real and recognizable, like an old friend.

The day after we left the university, I found that Tommy had five "cases" already docketed, on which to begin his philanthropic experimentation; five human misfits they were, half ludicrous and half pathetic. For the time being, he had them corralled together in a downtown hotel, to the undisguised astonishment of the other guests and the infinite discomfiture of the management, which, as it happened, could not well afford to refuse any patronage offered by so fabulous a millionaire as the Noblest Roman. Meanwhile, Tommy beamed upon his little flock with the benevolence of an amiable patriarch, blandly unconscious of either criticism or wonder on the part of observers.

"While I don't claim to be doing anything absolutely new, Dick," he assured me modestly, "I believe that what I am undertaking will be on a more extensive scale than any one has ever attempted before."

"I don't doubt it for a moment, Noblest Roman," I warmly assured him. "And you've started out by herding together the weirdest specimens of humanity I've ever seen! I wonder if one is permitted to know what happens next?"

"Well, here's Tim Mallory, the brick-

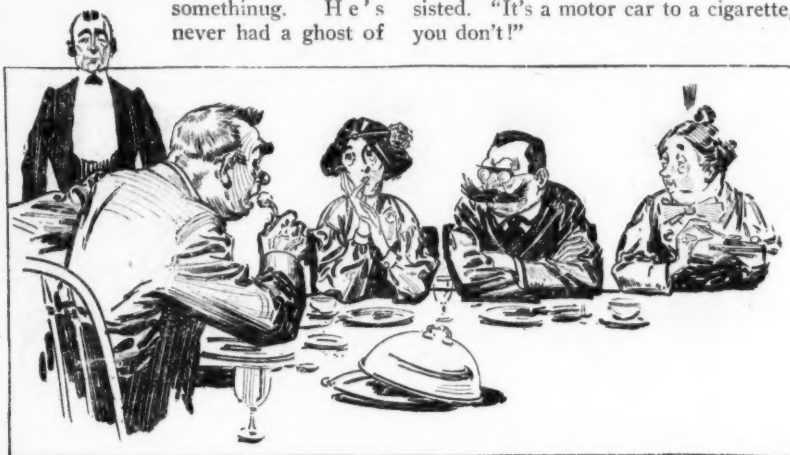
layer, for instance," Tommy replied. "Do you know what we are going to do with Tim?"

I confessed I didn't. It was barely possible that Tim was a good workman, but appearances were somehow against him.

"We are going to make a sculptor of him," announced my employer proudly. "Consider what a privilege it is, Dick, to be able to do a thing like that! I've seen some little figures he did, with lumps of cement or something. He's never had a ghost of

know 'em apart. But the point is, my dear fellow, Tim wants to be a sculptor, and I'm going to let him be it. You see, it's all largely an attitude of mind, and perhaps you don't know what it is—what an unspeakable tragedy—to go through life being one thing with your hands—with the external part of you—when all the time your soul wants to be something else."

"To sculp or not to sculp," I paraphrased irreverently. "But suppose I don't know what it is, Tommy," I insisted. "It's a motor car to a cigarette, you don't!"



Whatever their artistic shortcomings, it must be admitted that everybody seemed who was not even like the

a chance, poor fellow, and he's simply pining away for lack of it."

"Sounds like a corking good idea," I assented heartily. "But tell me, Noblest Roman, can he deliver the goods?"

Tommy's face assumed as severe an expression as it was possible for a singularly plump and amiable countenance to assume.

"Now, how should I know that?" he demanded. "I've no claim to being a connoisseur. Post-impressionists, Futurists, Insurgents—I have to confess they are meaningless names. I don't

My companion got slowly and, it must be confessed, lumberingly out of his chair, and stood facing me with ponderous gravity. It occurred to me at the moment that poor Tommy's contours, never ethereal, were rapidly acquiring the rotundity beloved of cartoonists when they exploit the trusts.

"Dick," he said huskily, "I get the motor car. I do know."

I was incredulous.

"Well, of all blamed ingratitude to the god of fortune!" I protested.

Tommy sighed.

"All my life long," he confessed, in a

tone of self-abasement, "I've wanted to be a great Russian dancer. But I wasn't Russian, and I never could learn the steps. Besides," he added hopelessly, "there were other reasons!"

As I had to concede the futility of such an ambition, there was no possible argument, and I decided to change the subject.

"When do we begin operations?" I wanted to know.

"Next week," Tommy assured me. "I bought Sturgis Island yesterday," he added, in quite the casual manner one would employ in mentioning the

of workers," he went on thoughtfully, "and the conditions will be as nearly ideal as is humanly possible."

"With an Irish bricklayer—sculptor," I observed, "an Austrian chef, and a barber who's probably a nihilist, you've got an uncommonly hopeful beginning!"

"Then I've found an exceptionally promising young laundress named Flossie," went on Tommy, nothing daunted. "Very much above the average, I should say, and with uncommonly high standards."

"Oh, Lord!" I groaned. "I do hope



to fall happily enough into place—all, except the unfortunate Miss Linterbury, round peg in the square hole.

purchase of a new pair of socks. "Used to be a resort for excursionists, you know, but wasn't a success. Already plenty of buildings to start with, and everything in good order. We'll run up this afternoon and look it over. I've just engaged an Austrian chef named Schneberger, and some kind of a barber. I'm not sure, but I'm afraid he's a nihilist."

"By thunder, what an unholy combination!" I ejaculated.

Tommy ignored the exclamation as irrelevant.

"We shall have a happy community

she's going to pursue one of the dumb kinds of art! Don't dare to tell me she's going to blossom into a coloratura soprano or a female cornetist!"

"She's not," Tommy assured me. "She's content to occupy a humble sphere in life and do indispensable work for the good of humanity."

I groaned again.

"Then she's got a mission, anyway," I objected. "I did hope she hadn't! Now, about the rest of this bunch at the hotel," I demanded. "Percival Wynch, for instance, who looks like a consumptive undertaker and orders

rhubarb pie for breakfast? And that amateur Mona Lisa, with a voice like a katydid?"

"Percival," returned Tommy, with a degree of tolerance that I had to admit was superb, "will confine himself to black and white, he thinks. I shall start a literary periodical as soon as possible, and Percival will be staff artist. The poor fellow's grown very tired of driving a grocery wagon. As for Miss Ackett—if she's the one you call 'Mona Lisa'—she handed me the manuscript of her first novel yesterday. A cloak model doesn't have very much leisure. I don't know how she ever managed it."

"Very unfortunate, I'm sure," was my somewhat ambiguous comment. "And that other dame, who's acquired enough false hair to corner the market—Miss Linterbury? If you've got no other particular use for her, she could be a model for Mallory and pose as a gargoyle."

Tommy frowned, and his face assumed its sternest expression.

"I haven't classified her, exactly," he admitted presently. "You must be aware, Dick, that all these things take time. I've got to work out Miss Linterbury along strictly scientific and metaphysical lines."

"But what is it she wants?" I demanded, astonished. "If your whole aim and policy is to hand right out to every aspirant exactly what said aspirant wants most, why don't you come across? What are you hedging for with Miss Linterbury? Don't you know what she's after?"

Tommy uttered a sound that was very near a groan.

"I wish I could tell you about it, Dick," he confessed, "but I can't—at least, not without the lady's consent. You see, she's confided to me her innermost secrets."

"And you don't intend to gratify her?" I insisted.

Tommy groaned again.

"Of course that's my usual policy," he acknowledged, "but this time I'm trying to get her to change her mental attitude, instead."

"Then she must want something quite horrible," I conjectured, my curiosity thoroughly aroused. "If she's not a worthy applicant, why not chuck her out and be done with it?"

Tommy fingered his eyeglasses and looked distressed.

"The case of Miss Linterbury," he admitted, "is giving me more trouble than all the rest of the proposition together. You see her ambition is—er—rather an awkward one to gratify."

"Isn't it just a mental attitude?" I wanted to know.

"Ye-es," Tommy returned doubtfully, "but you see—er—I'd have to change my mental attitude, too."

At that moment a horrible suspicion darted into my mind, but, looking at Tommy's troubled face, I dared not give it utterance.

"By the way, there's a boat at two," he observed, changing the subject, "and Sturgis Island—which I shall rechristen 'Bunt Island,' in honor of my uncle—is two hours' sail. Now I'll tell you, Dick," confidentially, "I'm going to give you the first choice of quarters. You can have any suite of rooms that pleases you."

I was astonished.

"But why such discrimination?" I wanted to know. "To be honest with you, I shall feel hopelessly unworthy in such a company."

"The last shall be first," quoted Tommy, with a disconcerting frankness, "and you see, Dick, I figure out that in some respects you'll occupy the most menial position in the community. You'll be called upon to do all the things that nobody else wants to do, and as I desire to equalize honors as far as possible, it's only fair to give you the best rooms."

I tried to accept the situation with philosophy and not to show how chagrined I felt. And they *were* beautiful rooms. A princess in an "ivied tower" could have possessed nothing more romantic than my garlanded case-ment, boasting a view that a hurried journalist would simply characterize as "beggarly description," in order not to tax further an already impoverished vocabulary. Furthermore, the suite was furnished with a magnificence such as no poor "confidential secretary" ever saw the like of before.

As speedily as possible, Tommy established all his curious retinue in more or less luxurious quarters of their own choosing, and day by day our number grew. It devolved upon me to welcome all novitiates at the pier, and to make myself as decorously agreeable as a rather obstreperous sense of humor would permit. I learned to flatter the timid and to soothe and cajole the troubled, with as few compunctions of conscience as a professional office seeker and as elastic a conception of truth as a census report.

Life on Bunt Island proved an exhilarating combination of screaming farce and Arabian Night's enchantment. Tommy founded a monthly magazine, to which Miss Ackett industriously contributed fiction conceived in a vein so dismal that Poe, in comparison, was a past master of sunny optimism. These effusions were invariably accompanied by sundry near-Cubist splotches which Percival Wynch, in collusion with an obliging engraver, mistook for illustrations. I remember also that the initial number featured an ode dedicated to poor Tommy, and composed by an attenuated individual whom I secretly dubbed "the Siberian exile."

Whatever their artistic shortcomings, it must be admitted that everybody seemed to fall happily enough into place—all, that is, except the unfortunate

Miss Linterbury, who was not even like the round peg in the square hole, for the peg did at least make an effort to adapt itself to circumstances, and Miss Linterbury didn't. She simply mooned about and hunted for four-leaf clovers, in spite of my repeated assurances that the genus was unknown to Bunt Island. But doubtless even that was preferable to her former occupation at Child's, even though she had served at the Thirty-fourth Street place, where they catch some of the overflow from the Waldorf.

As for the other members of our community, they went their several ways, and industriously pursued the various arts, both articulate and otherwise. Mallory had a studio in the Fine Arts Building, where unspeakable things in plaster multiplied with incredible rapidity, while on the floor above him a grand-opera aspirant stood all day, his eyes fixed in a glassy stare, addressing thin tenor notes to the ceiling, which he implored to love him more and more.

On Thursday evenings, we held a general meeting at the clubhouse, for informal discussions of the work that was being done, and on Saturdays an elaborate dinner was given in the club ballroom, at which I was invariably pressed into service as toastmaster.

Not far distant from the clubhouse—a stone's throw, perhaps, though it would depend upon who threw the stone—stood the "Lyric Theater." We had a permanent stock organization, a small, but athletic corps of scene-shifters, and an orchestra. Performances of "East Lynne" and "Deserted on a Desert" alternated with the latest musical-comedy releases, and it was rumored on good authority that the first violin—who had doubtless acquired his extreme muscularity of style while serving as a stevedore—was collaborating with the Siberian exile on a new opera, of which we were shortly to enjoy the



Mallory had a studio in the Fine Arts Building, where unspeakable things in plaster multiplied with incredible rapidity.

première. Admission was entirely by invitation, and considerable pomp and circumstance attended our first-night performances. The box seats on these occasions were invariably occupied by such persons as Flossie, the head laundress, and her assistants; Chippy Andrews, the bootblack, and his mates; Schneberger, the Austrian chef; Kro-koff, the barber, who was probably a nihilist; and my humble self; for had not Tommy explained, long since, that "the last should be first"? He contended that the poets, artists, and musicians should certainly derive their due share of "sweetness and light" from merely pursuing their several vocations, and that justice, poetic or otherwise, demanded the bestowal of all possible public honors upon those who were content to bear the real burdens of humanity and do the humble things.

Miss Linterbury, still anomalous and unexplained, always sat in an orchestra chair, wearing a confection of taupe and magenta deluged with such an abundance of yellow lace that it resembled a muddy avalanche. I used to find myself watching her face with a degree of curiosity that approached fascination. I was worried about her, without quite knowing why. Tommy's manner had always been just a shade less cordial toward this lady than toward any other living being. It was as if he were a little afraid of her, and the dark suspicion that I had been cherishing secretly grew apace, especially as Miss Linterbury seemed to distrust me.

One night, after Tommy's experiment had been in progress for almost a year, I betrayed something of my feeling to Flossie. For some time I had suspected Flossie of a breach of the law similar to my own—that is, of carrying a concealed sense of humor.

"I'm worried about Miss Linterbury," I said abruptly.

Flossie looked startled.

10

"Please don't ask me," she begged. "I promised I wouldn't tell a soul."

"Aha!" thought I. "The young person does know a thing or two!"

"Flossie," I said aloud, "your discretion is as commendable as it is rare! But as this thing concerns my very dear friend, Mr. Gwynne, I feel that I should like to—to get it out of my system—don't you know?—by conferring over it with some one really interested, like yourself."

"Of course," Flossie conceded, "if you already know about it, that's different. You see, Miss Linterbury just had to tell somebody about her engagement, so she told me."

"Her—engagement?" I echoed, my worst fears realized. "I'm just wondering," hastily, "whether her version of this thing tallies with Mr. Gwynne's."

"I guess it don't," Flossie assured me, "because I don't think he's one tiny bit in love with her, do you? She's old enough to be his great-aunt, an' she's got false teeth."

"You don't think—what?" I wanted to know.

"He's an awful kind-hearted gentleman," Flossie resumed, with a sigh, ignoring my interruption, "an' not bad lookin', neither, though some wouldn't think so, I guess, that likes thin ones."

"We can't have him sacrificed," I said vaguely, wondering what in the world could be done.

"She oughter let him off, hadn't she?" remarked Flossie. "I call it real unladylike of her to hang on. She's had a lot of fun now, with all kinds of swell engagement presents. My goodness! He's sent her boxes an' boxes of candy, all red satin an' ribbons, an' she's got indigestion something horrible, eatin' it, an' he's given her some little gold things on chains that rattle, an' a canary bird that died, an' seventeen books—"

"Sh!" I interrupted suddenly. "I

recognize the Noblest Roman's footfall. Let's be looking for the moon."

"There isn't any," objected Flossie.

"Did I say there was?" I demanded, gazing earnestly into the heavens.

Tommy had something very serious on his mind. There was no possible doubt of that.

"I've been looking for you for half an hour," he told me, apologizing to Flossie, and dragging me away in the direction of his private library.

Once inside, he locked the door, dropped into an easy-chair, and prefaced his remarks with an abysmal sigh.

"Dick," he began, regarding me with mournful intensity, "what would you say is the most dangerous feature of our American civilization?"

"Give it up," I said cheerfully. "What is?"

"The license of the press," he returned with conviction, and handed me a section from one of the Sunday papers.

The sheet contained a full-page story, illustrated in the lavish style common to Sunday supplements, and exploiting "Thomas Gwynne, the world's most eccentric philanthropist, and his freakish experiment on Bunt Island." The stuff was written in a vein of ribald humor and cheap satire that made my blood boil as I read it. It was one thing for me to laugh secretly at the Noblest Roman's most cherished theories, but quite another for one of the most widely read newspapers of the country to do an unholy thing like this.

"I suppose, Dick," observed my friend sadly, indulging in another sigh, more abysmal than the first, "you'll find this scandalous abuse of us rather amusing? Almost everything seems to amuse you."

"Tommy," I returned emphatically, "you've made the wrong guess. The chap that had no more sense of real humor in him than to write this ought

to be limited to obituaries! It's an outrage!"

Tommy looked somewhat comforted.

"It's not myself I care for, you know," he explained humbly. "It's the effect it will have that I'm worried about. Only look what it says about poor Tim Mallory and his work! The section is headed: 'A Sculptor Who Outcubes the Cubists.' And it goes on to say: 'The dominant piece in the studio was a colossal mass of plaster, resembling an overturned piano box in a state of partial disintegration. A brief inscription called it "The Dying Horse." Now, doubtless there are persons who would accept this inchoate monstrosity for a horse, just as there are those who accept cold-storage chicken and an insane Fourth of July. Some people would accept anything. It must be admitted, however, that the adjective "dying" was an inspiration.' Now, what do you think of that?"

"Of the article or the horse?" I asked guardedly.

"Dick," Tommy returned, in his most academic manner, "the recognition of talent is more or less a mental attitude on the part of the public. And I've found out that if he lives to be a thousand, the public is not going to admit any talent in Tim Mallory!"

"Tommy," I queried bluntly, "do you admit any?"

"That's not at all a feature of my undertaking," was the evasive reply. "I can let Tim be a sculptor, but I can't make the world accept him. And now this'll break his heart."

"He don't have to see it," I returned briskly. "I tell you what"—consulting my watch—"I'll catch the next boat to town and buy up the whole edition."

Tommy looked grateful.

"But you're too late," he said, shaking his head. "Percival Wynch went this morning."

"Has he got back yet?" I questioned.

"Yes, he has," Tommy replied, "and

he had some papers bulging out of his pocket when I saw him, and he pretended not to see me. Later, I found him talking to Miss Ackett, and she had been crying. That libelous story treats her even worse than it does Mal-lory."

"Well," I said, as hopefully as I could, "the press has put one over on us this time, and we've just got to brace up and bear it, that's all. Every man-size undertaking has its detractors."

"I'm glad you look at it that way," said Tommy simply. "But, Dick, that thing's brutal! You—you haven't read all that article, have you?" And Tommy actually blushed. "Suppose—er—suppose you look at that last paragraph?"

I knew what it would be in advance. I never learned where that journalist got his information, but in the final paragraph of his story he waxed insultingly jovial over the engagement of Thomas Gwynne and Miss Martha Ellen Linterbury.

"Good Lord!" I gasped. "Has she seen the thing?"

"Yes," returned Tommy weakly, "she has."

"And—what did she say?" I wanted to know.

"She said," confessed Tommy chokingly, "that inasmuch as our engagement was now announced, she—she thought we ought to set an early date for the—wedding!"

Tommy's utter helplessness touched me to the heart.

"Let me think a minute," I said hurriedly. "The trouble is, old chap, you've gone this philanthropy, stunt to the limit. Of course, weddings do follow engagements sometimes, but it strikes me it would be much less commonplace for the lady, after being engaged to you, to marry somebody else!"

"What do you mean?" demanded Tommy suspiciously.

"Why," I explained, "your admirable

intention is to give all these people of yours the things they want most in life. And it seems that what Miss Linterbury wants most is a husband. But in all due modesty, dear fellow, does she specifically want you?"

"I don't know," confessed Tommy, mopping his brow, "whether she does or not."

"We'll find a substitute," I went on cheerfully, "and you can make the couple a handsome settlement. 'Bless you, my children,' and that sort of thing. Let's see, now! Percival Wynch is a bit youngish for the job, and I strongly suspect the Siberian exile of being a bigamist. But how about Schneberger? Doesn't it strike you that Schneberger is just the man?"

Tommy beamed. Evidently it did strike him.

"Dick," he said, "if you handle this for me, I'll—well, I don't want to be reckless, but there's nothing within reason that I won't do for you!"

I seized Tommy's hand and wrung it so heartily that he winced.

"Leave it to me," I promised. "I'll fix it."

It was by no means an easy task. Schneberger proved skittish and argumentative, and the lady drenched three pocket handkerchiefs before she would listen to reason, but I brought them both round, after a three or four hours' session apiece. So absorbed was I in this exhausting task, during most of the day that followed my interview with Tommy, that I was quite unaware of the momentous events taking place simultaneously in other parts of the island.

Late in the afternoon, I went to Tommy with the news of my success. To my great astonishment, I found him a crumpled heap, sunk forlornly in the depths of an enormous leather chair.

"Cheer up, Noblest Roman," I comforted him. "Here I've done the nifti-

est little job on record! It wasn't a soft snap exactly, but Schneberger and Martha Ellen both fell for it, before I'd done with 'em. Guess the next thing on the program's a visit to Tiffany's. Shall I have the full name engraved on the wedding silver, or only a monogram?"

"Dick," returned Tommy, in a voice of gloom, "you have been more than kind, and I can't tell you how much I appreciate it. But I'm sorry I allowed you to do it! It would be as little as I could do to make that one last sacrifice. I ought to marry Miss Linterbury myself!"

My disappointment was inexpressible.

"Well, of all——" I began, and stopped, silenced by something in Tommy's face.

"I ought to do that much," he went on presently, "because I've been a failure in everything else. Don't interrupt me," he begged, seeing that I was about to protest. "It's true. Do you know what happened an hour ago? Of course you don't. You were busy about something else. I received a delegation, headed by Percival Wynch as spokesman. Do you suppose," he queried moodily, "that the principal reason people ever want anything in this world is because they don't think they can get it?"

I reflected.

"To quote my favorite classic, 'Alice in Wonderland,'" I returned, "your question is certainly English, but it doesn't seem to have any sort of meaning."

Tommy gave the sort of premonitory sigh that evidenced his determination to unburden his mind completely.

"Bunt Island is a failure," he announced unhappily.

I raised my eyebrows interrogatively as he paused.

"Out with it!" I commanded.

"Percival says," explained Tommy

mournfully, "that they all feel I've put them in a false position, and held them up to the ridicule of the world! They have been grossly maligned, slandered, misrepresented, and abused. And they're all going back to New York!"

"And what then?" I asked.

"Why, then," Tommy explained sadly, "they'll return to their former stations. They'll sink back into being grocery clerks and bricklayers and cloak models. I've done all I could do for them, and I've accomplished nothing. I've tried to exalt the humble——"

"Perhaps that's just the trouble," I interrupted eagerly. "Perhaps they're jealous of your giving all the public honors to those of lowly pursuits."

"They are," Tommy confessed. "The artists and poets and things are actually jealous of Flossie and Schneberger and—and—you! Oh, it's all a fiasco, Dick, and I'm a superfluity! I'm of no sort of use in the universe!"

"That's just a mental attitude," I retorted. And then I had an inspiration. "Superfluity, indeed!" I protested. "Why, you misguided old chap, you know what? You've simply achieved a miracle! You've accomplished the feat of—a—a philanthropic Napoleon! You've shown a lot of brainless imbeciles where they really belong in the scheme of things. Lord, Tommy, you've helped them find themselves! What man alive could handle a bigger job than that?"

As I spoke, I had the satisfaction of seeing a quiet smile relax the tense corners of Tommy's mouth.

"Where they really belong," he repeated slowly, "in the scheme of things. Dick," he went on, touchingly grateful, "I shall never be able to thank you enough for that! A lifetime wouldn't be long enough to thank you in. Why, I thought I had looked at Bunt Island from every conceivable mental attitude, but it has remained for you to make me see it as it really is!"

The Shining Adventure

By Dana Burnet

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

The happy ending of the romantic adventure of that imaginative, brave-spirited, little boy who set out to buy Gramercy Park and become its king. A whimsical story of great charm.

PART II.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE king awoke by pleasant, slow degrees. First a sunbeam touched his eyes, then a fragrance—as of breakfast—assaulted his nostrils, and finally a voice, low and tender, propounded close to his ear a question calculated to plumb the very depths of drowsiness.

"Do you like pancakes?"

The king, with blinking eyes, looked up and perceived the very good bad woman bending above his pillow.

"With sirup?"

"With sirup."

The king sat bolt upright, rubbing his eyes.

"I love 'em."

"Climb out, then, Galahad. Breakfast is almost ready."

Among the king's proudest accomplishments was the ability to dress himself. This being an especial occasion, he plunged into it at racing speed. Shirt, knickers, and stockings, went on with a rush, the very good bad woman helping here and there with a refractory button.

Breakfast followed, and such a breakfast as it was! Delicious pancakes, piled in delectable stacks! Thick golden sirup, flowing in slow cataracts from a blue china pitcher! Fresh butter in quantities, adding succulence to the joy of the sirup! Bacon, too, brown and crisp and melting upon the tongue! As

upon the previous night, the king began with the sweets, being resolved to make the most of his freedom. He began with the sirup, which is, of course, against all rules. Ordinarily one is compelled to eat two with butter first.

Unfortunately there must be an end to all delights. The bad woman looked up at last from her smoking skillet.

"That's the very last of the batter," she said, and turned to him with a queer little smile.

The king thrust into his mouth a final neat stack of sirupy fragments, emitting at the same time a sigh of perfect repletion. Slipping down from his chair, he tugged at the precautionary napkin placed beneath his chin.

This was the moment that the bad woman had put off as long as she could; the moment that she had fortified herself against, womanlike, with smiles. But her heart was near to breaking. She had realized that she must pay a price for her little adventure, and now she was paying double and triple, as a bad woman always pays. But for all the ache in her breast, she would not have had it otherwise.

From the bureau she took the tin sword and, kneeling, buckled it about the king's waist. A moment she held him against her heart.

"You go down the stairs," she said, *"and then up the passage to the gate in the fence."*



As on the previous night, the king began with the sweets, being resolved to make the most of his freedom.

Her lips brushed his cheek.

They were very simple directions. The king, fortified by innumerable pancakes, went confidently down the bad woman's stairs, now rather unpleasant with the daylight upon them, and out into a world of noise and smell and brazen sun.

It was a moment calling for some extreme expression of the soul. Standing in the bad woman's doorway, the king puckered his lips and gave vent to a long-drawn, tremulous whistle. Then, with a light heart, he turned the corner of the bad woman's shabby castle and threaded the narrow lane that led straight to the gate in the fence.

CHAPTER XV.

If the king had slept that night, the queen had not. Hour after hour she

lay upon her tumble-down cot, staring out at the nosegay of stars that flecked her bit of heaven. About her, in familiar profusion, slept the smaller brothers and sisters, blurred heaps that moaned in the heat of the summer night. But the queen lay very still, with wide-open eyes.

Her thoughts were of the green country, and the great adventure of to-morrow. At the head of the cot, where she could touch it with her hand, stood the red plush crutch. That night, for the first time, she had not prayed the Lady Mary to make her well. She was content to be a lamey.

The gray ghost of dawn came plucking at the stars, came peering at the window. The day of days was breaking above the roofs of the beggar city. Already little Maggie could feel the

crown upon her hair. All past hideousness, all taunts of cruel children, all heartaches, all loneliness, seemed to be swept aside by that advancing tide of light.

She stretched out her hand and touched the red plush crutch; then laid her cheek against the pillow with a sigh.

An upheaval of smaller O'Connors awoke her to the realization that it was broad daylight. She jumped out of bed and made her meager toilet in a fever of haste. Breakfast she scarcely tasted. There was another wine upon her lips.

"I declare," said Mrs. O'Connor to the prospective alderman, who sat cooling his coffee at the head of the table, "I never saw little Maggie so happy lookin'. There's a fair sparkle to her eyes."

"'Tis the thought of bein' daughter to an alderman," said Mr. O'Connor modestly.

But it was not the thought of being daughter to an alderman that brought the sparkle to little Maggie's eyes. Who would be an alderman's daughter when she might be a queen?

Once in the street, the red plush crutch tucked under her arm, little Maggie set about her self-appointed task of gathering up the king's adventurers. Her first concern was for Mickey Flynn. How had the night affected his enthusiasm?

Resolutely she entered the hallway of a certain unlovely tenement, gray and grim as a prison. It was not long before she heard the feet of the captain upon the stairs, and his shrill whistle penetrating the depths of the human honeycomb.

"Hello, Mickey Flynn."

"'Lo."

"What're you goin' to do to-day?"

The chief of staff paused in his headlong flight and stared at the queen.

Then, convinced that some unwarranted demand was to be made upon his time, he edged quickly toward the door. But little Maggie clutched his ragged sleeve.

"Aw, I dunno," said Mickey. "Have fun, I guess."

"Aren't you goin' to run away?"

A light of sudden recollection dawned in Mickey's eyes.

"Gee! I forgot. Where is he now?"

This was a question that had been troubling Maggie's mind for the past hour. But her confidence in the return of the king never faltered.

"In the back yard," said Maggie, and added under her breath, "I guess." Which, as every moralist knows, saved it from being a lie.

"Where'dja get the crutch?" asked Mickey suddenly.

"He bought it."

"I'll bet his old man's got a million dollars."

"More'n that," said little Maggie confidently.

The spirit of enthusiasm now glowed warm in Mickey's breast, and with it a renewed sense of his own importance.

"Leave go my arm," said he. "I got to get up the army."

Five minutes later Mickey Flynn was striding through the grocer's passage with O'Connor's Alley at his heels. At the rear of the procession trotted little Maggie, her face deathly pale, a great fear in her heart. Would the king come in time?

"He ain't here!" Mickey Flynn, after a brief survey of the back yard, turned and glared accusingly at the queen. "I bet he ain't comin' at all!"

Little Maggie hobbled forward.

"Yes, he is comin', too, Mickey Flynn," she cried, tears flashing in her eyes. "I know he's comin'. I——" Suddenly she broke off and leveled a quivering forefinger at the gate in the fence. "I told you so!"

The alley turned as one. There, just entering the broken gateway, was the

king, his sword at his side, the light of the morning on his hair.

There was a moment's breathless silence. Then a wild cheer swept the back yard. Small ragged bodies pressed about the returned hero. Grimy fists pounded his back. The wooden swords, snatched hastily from the pile, were brandished in air. But beyond the shrieking circle the king saw little Maggie's face, white with eagerness and longing, and he knew that the great moment was at hand.

"Everybody get in line," he shouted.

The hubbub ceased by degrees. The king's command was repeated through the ranks. The chief of staff, now keyed to a high pitch of excitement, went about prodding the army into place, settling disputes, quelling duels, and generally bringing order out of chaos. Standing two by two, the king's host reached quite to the fence—an imposing array. In the front rank stood the band, with proud faces, awaiting the word to advance.

Mickey Flynn placed himself at the head of the line, spat on his hands, drew his sword from the convenient rent in his trousers.

"Forward!" cried the king. "March!"

A-rub-a-dub-dub! A-rub-a-dub-dub! Tra, la, la, la, la!

With a crash of falling drumsticks and the shrilling of a firsthand harmonicon, the adventurers surged forward, swung into step. Out of the mouth of the passageway they came, an army of barefoot infantrymen, of grimy-cheeked supernumeraries, of pig-tailed atoms clutching still lesser atoms.

A-rub-a-dub-dub! A-rub-a-dub-dub!

Two by two they wheeled into the turmoil of O'Connor's Alley, not a great company, as armies go, but one, I think, that must have waked some answering echo from the dust of the holy lands, where the dead crusaders sleep. Fairly up the center of the by-way trod that army of hope, between

the freebooting pushcarts, through the litter of the day's business, past the gloomy, squalid tenements, heralded in its coming by the throb of a drum and the voice of a firsthand harmonicon. Pale faces stared from window and doorway, gazing with faint wonder at O'Connor's Alley marching by. Loud-voiced women turned from their morning bargains to see what new disturbance was this; then went back to their eternal petty haggling over prices. It was only the children!

Suddenly a woman darted into the street. Her hand fell heavily upon the shoulder of Sadie Goronivinsky, and that small pilgrim was lost to the cause. Others fell by the wayside, victims of parental authority, until there were but a scant dozen left in the ranks. But these were valiant spirits and true.

A-rub-a-dub-dub! Tra, la, la, la!

Back across the unmentionable avenues marched the king, with his empire at his heels. His heart beat madly. Already in the distance he could see the blur of green that marked the boundary of the forbidden kingdom.

A ragged cheer ran down the line. The army, too, had caught sight of that distant green. Then out they marched into the little square, and saw the park lying cool and sweet and green in the sunlight. Brown sparrows fluttered along the clean gravel walks; an ancient gardener stooped above a bed of flowers; a fountain threw silver mists into the jeweled air.

The king put his hand into his pocket and drew forth the key to the iron gate. The army of the faithful few broke ranks and clustered about him. Breathless voices cried out to him to hurry, hurry. From afar, a very impressive policeman bore down upon the scene, his brass buttons winking in the strong light. Inside the fence pale nursemaids snatched up their precious charges and stood like frightened fowls, huddling their broods beneath their

skirts. The aged gardener alone seemed to understand. He came limping toward the gate, smiling and nodding and holding out his earth-stained old hands.

And then, just as the king was about to twist the key in the lock, he remembered his promise to the queen. She was to be the first in! He turned and saw her hobbling desperately along the opposite sidewalk, her face flushed and burning, her lips parted.

"Come on, Maggie," called the king.

With a little imploring gesture, she hopped off the curb and came diagonally toward him, her eyes fixed upon his face. Somewhere across the city sounded the belled voice of a great clock, striking the half hour.

And at that moment, from the mouth of the eminently mentionable avenue that flows into the square, the king saw approaching an electric motor, of strangely familiar appointments, whose stout driver and slim footman wore a no less familiar maroon-and-buff livery. It was Aunt Philomena's brougham!

The king shrank back against the gate, bewildered, confused. The sight of the brougham had brought back, with startling suddenness, the entire scheme of his former life. The memory of it stood like a prison tower, threatening his hard-won freedom. Then he saw the meeting of his two worlds, the one moving in the shape of a rich and shining machine, the other limping in the dust of the highroad, human and vulnerable, and he ran forward, with a shout of warning:

"Maggie, look out!"

The lame queen heard and glanced over her shoulder in alarm. The car swerved sharply around the corner, sounding its gong. With a frightened sob, little Maggie turned—in the wrong direction. The crutch slipped from her grasp. She stood white with horror, her arms raised as if to fend off the Juggernaut.

Then, even as the motor slid with

shrieking brakes, hands struck her body. She spun half about, stumbled, and plunged headlong into the arms of the panting policeman.

The king had a blinding vision of two maroon-and-buff creatures leaning high above him, and after that—darkness and dying voices and a great pain.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Barker is never late," said Miss Philomena.

The bishop drew out a gold watch as plump and round as he.

"Eleven-thirty—ah!"

They stood at the library window, awaiting the arrival of Barker and the brougham, both conscious of the slight constraint that presages a departure. At another window stood the doctor, apparently entranced by some passing drama of the street. Through the open door of the dining room the rest of the conference could be seen refreshing themselves with sandwiches and iced coffee.

Suddenly the doctor wheeled from his window.

"Philomena," he said sharply, "look across the street there, by the park gate——"

Miss Philomena turned in surprise; but at that moment caught sight of the brougham rolling smoothly into the square.

"Here's Barker now!" she exclaimed, with an audible sigh of relief.

"Ah!" said the bishop. He approached the doctor, extending his hand in a true spirit of Christian forgiveness.

"Good-by, Doctor MacLean. I—ah—trust that our differences of opinion will not—— Good gracious! Are you ill?"

"What is it?" cried Miss Philomena, starting forward. "What do you see?"

"Your car has killed a child!" roared the doctor.

He plunged headlong for the door,

brushing the plump bishop out of his path with one sweep of an arm.

The entire household came surging to the window, with shocked faces and a discord of confused, hysterical sentences.

"It was the brougham," whispered Miss Philomena brokenly. "A child—I think some one is hurt. Doctor Mac-Lean has gone out——"

"It was a little cripple," said a voice. "I saw her just before it happened."

"No. It was the boy. He ran in front of the car——"

"That's right. The boy!"

"Plucky thing——"

"The wheels struck him——"

"There's the doctor!"

"He's bringing him in——"

Up the brownstone steps came the tall doctor, his grim lips set like granite, the body of a boy in his arms. On the sidewalk behind him a group of ragged children stood with white faces.

"Get away, you fools!"

The eminent ladies and gentlemen who had crowded out to the hallway trod on one another's toes in the effort to escape the doctor's eyes. He strode through them like an avenging angel, holding that limp small burden against his breast. A light, striking through the stained glass over the door, fell unexpectedly upon the child's face. Miss Philomena swayed forward with a great cry.

"What have I done?"

At the sudden anguish of her voice, the doctor paused as if a knife had touched his heart. Then he turned his head, slowly, and looked at her.

It was very still in the library; so still that the bishop could hear the ticking of the watch in his pocket. The whole house, indeed, seemed hushed and waiting, like a house that holds its breath.

In a room above stairs, a stern-faced doctor and a phlegmatic nurse were

fighting a battle with death; fighting desperately and against heavy odds. An hour ago word had come down from the playroom that the fight was hopeless, the day lost.

A vision of Miss Philomena's face rose before the bishop's eyes. He felt toward her a sort of impotent resentment. Why, in her hour of trouble, did she not come to him? Why must she remain in the hall outside the playroom door, her hands locked across her breast, her head inclined to catch every whisper of that grim battle in which she could take no part? As a comforter, especially of feminine distress, he knew himself to be an adept. Why, then——

He looked up with a start. Miss Philomena stood in the doorway, her arms held stiffly at her side, her face expressionless and cold.

"He's a little better," she said, without emotion. "He may not—— They will know in an hour."

The bishop sprang up and took one of her hands in his, leading her gently to a chair. Then he sat down beside her.

"You must not reproach yourself," said the bishop, in the voice of the comforter.

"Why not? The fault is mine. If he dies now, it will be God's punishment——" She leaned forward in her chair, her whole body tense, her eyes feverishly alight. "Don't you see? In front of my own door—my own car! God's punishment!"

The bishop drew back startled. But at the look on his face, Miss Philomena regained her composure and became the considerate hostess, whose first concern is for the welfare of her guests.

"Barker is prostrated," she said quietly. "I have telephoned for a man from the garage to drive you to the station."

"My dear lady, I beg of you——"



The army of the faithful few broke ranks and clustered about him. Breathless voices cried out to him to hurry, hurry.

"The brougham will be here at five-thirty."

The bishop bowed his head. Plainly,

Providence had decreed that he should ride to his train in the electric brougham.

A dry cough caused them to turn. Simms stood in the center of the room, a pained embarrassment upon his wooden features.

"Beg pardon, ma'am. There's a child on the steps, ma'am."

"A what, Simms?"

"A child, ma'am."

"What is it doing there?"

"Crying, ma'am."

"Crying!"

"Yes, ma'am. I'm at a loss, ma'am."

"Bring the child to me," said Miss Philomena, in a low, strained voice.

"Very good, ma'am."

The butler disappeared into the hall. The bishop rose and walked nervously to the shelves, where he proceeded to stare fiercely at the backs of a set of Thackeray. First he had missed his train and now he was to be despoiled of his rôle of comforter.

Miss Philomena sat with her hands upon the arms of her chair, bending forward slightly, her glance fixed upon the curtained doorway. Presently she heard Simms' voice; then the butler reappeared, holding back the heavy portières.

"I forgot to say—a female child, ma'am."

Miss Philomena saw the flutter of a ragged skirt. Then into the room hopped a little lame girl, with great tragic blue eyes and tear-stained cheeks. She came straight toward the pale woman in the chair, unawed by the strangeness of her surroundings, unconscious of their magnificence. A pace away, she stopped and leaned quivering upon her crutch. Then, drawing a great breath, she said:

"Is he goin' to die?"

"I don't know," replied Miss Philomena, in a voice strangely humble. Then, taking the child's thin face between her hands, she asked: "What were you crying for, out there on the steps?"

"For him," said the child.

"What is your name?" continued Miss Philomena, very gently.

"Maggie."

"And where do you come from?"

"From O'Connor's Alley. *He* brought us. He said we could play in the park, and all. He——"

"Where did you meet him?"

"He came."

"Came to O'Connor's Alley?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Was there any one with him? A lady?"

"No, ma'am. He was all alone. He had a fight with Mickey Flynn."

"And what happened then?"

"Then he paid for every one to ride on the merry-go-round. He had a bag of pennies——" But suddenly the light of that glorious reminiscence faded from her eyes. She grasped Miss Philomena's arm with convulsive fingers. "*Is he goin' to die?*"

"No, no," said Miss Philomena, almost roughly. Then her voice took on its former gentleness: "What was it about the park?"

"He said it was his. He had the key, and all. He was goin' to have it a kingdom, like's in the fairy tales. He was the king—he said. And he said I could be—he said I could be——"

She paused, staring at Miss Philomena in dumb misery. This was to have been her day of days!

"What did he say that you could be?"

"He said—that I could be—the queen!"

Miss Philomena stooped swiftly and caught the slight figure in her arms.

"And so you shall be yet!" she cried, thinking only to drive that terrible starved look from the child's eyes.

But little Maggie shook her head hopelessly.

"I spoiled it all," she whispered. "He was at the gate, and he called me. Then I started across the street—and it came—and he ran in front of it——"

The red plush crutch tumbled suddenly to the floor. Little Maggie's face was hidden in the lace at Miss Philomena's bosom, her hands clung to the rose silk. "I was goin' to be the queen!" she sobbed. "The queen!"

A footstep sounded on the stairs beyond the door. Miss Philomena, her arms still about the child, lifted her head quickly. The bishop turned from the shelves.

The doctor entered the room. On his face, so like a gray rock, were traces of storm, of strife; yet there was about him an indescribable air of triumph, of victory. Miss Philomena's lips moved.

"Well?"

"There is a slight hope."

"Thank God!"

The doctor came forward slowly and laid his hand upon Maggie's shoulder.

"Aren't you the little girl I saw—out there?"

"Yes, sir," said the child. Then, lifting her tragic eyes to his, she asked breathlessly: "Is he goin' to get well?"

"We'll see," growled the doctor. "We'll see." To Miss Philomena he said: "I must run now. The nurse will know where to find me if anything turns up. Where does this young lady live?"

"In O'Connor's Alley," replied Miss Philomena, and for some reason she patted the frail hand still clinging to the fold of her dress.

The doctor bent down and peered into little Maggie's face.

"Will you let me take you home?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'll send you both in the brougham," said Miss Philomena, rising.

"No need. I've already telephoned for a cab." He strode to the window and looked out. "Yes, it's here."

"So is the brougham."

At this the bishop spun about and confronted them, his plump face a composite picture of outraged impor-

tance, neglected virtue, and pure physical discomfort.

"My train!" blurted the bishop, and immediately would have given all that he possessed to have recalled those words.

Miss Philomena stared at him with a curious diagnosing glance, as if she had never seen him before. Her eyes met his, and she smiled faintly.

"I am sure," said Miss Philomena, "that you will not mind taking the cab."

And so little Maggie rode home in state, as a queen should go. And if there be any scoffer who doubts her triumph, I will lead a hundred witnesses to his doorstep within the hour, any one of whom will swear that never in all the history of the alley was there such a home-coming as this!

"I promise you nothing. Mind, now, no getting your hopes up! But if you will bring her to the hospital to-morrow—say at eleven—I will make an examination. Then we can decide whether a treatment is possible."

"God be good to ye, doctor! If ye'll only cure little Maggie of her lameness, I'll work my fingers to the bone for ye—"

"Stuff and nonsense, Mrs. O'Connor!" Growling and grumbling to forestall further expressions of gratitude, the doctor rose from the kitchen chair and said brusquely: "To-morrow at eleven. Show that card I gave you to the man at the door."

"The holy angels bless——"

"Stuff and nonsense!"

Mrs. O'Connor wiped her eyes on the corner of her apron and smiled tremulously at the doctor. Woman-like, she had seen through his thin disguise of gruffness.

"'Tis a kind man ye are," she said.

The doctor snorted and strode to the window overlooking the historic back yard. In the clear space between the rubbish piles, little Maggie sat recount-

ing her adventures to a rapt audience. The doctor stood for a moment, looking down. Then he said abruptly:

"If you must bless somebody, bless the boy who saved little Maggie's life."

"Is he hurt bad, doctor?"

"He is," said the doctor grimly.

Again Mrs. O'Connor had recourse to the corner of her apron.

"And only yesterday," she faltered, "he was sittin' here at the table like one of my own. 'Tis strange how things happen——" She broke off, twisting her red hands in her apron, a puzzled light in her tired eyes. "'Tis strange how one person's hurt is another person's happiness. 'Twas the little lad sent you to the alley, in a way."

The doctor did not look at her. He was staring down into the yard.

"I will do what I can," he muttered at last.

"Heaven bless ye," said the woman, "for bein' so good to us!"

At that the doctor turned.

"It's high time," he roared, "that some one was good to you!"

And jamming his hat on his head, he went down the malodorous stairs to the street.

CHAPTER XVII.

The king dwelt in Sick-abad Country, between snowy pillow mountains and the lowland of a checkered quilt. A turban of bandages crowned his hair; one arm was strapped to his side. He seemed very still and small.

Near at hand, a blue-and-white nurse sat writing temperatures on a chart. The Christmas soldiers, former dictators of the playroom, lay unceremoniously tumbled in a corner. The noble Arab stood with a bedquilt flung over his head, a melancholy shape. Faint odors of iodoform permeated the air.

But they had moved the bed to the windows, and over the mountaintops of his pillows the king could see the plumed trees bowing in the wind: Occa-

sionally, when the breeze shifted, sweet earth smells came up to him, and the gossip of birds; so that no matter how cruel the pain, he could never forget the kingdom that was his. Day after day, as he climbed the pillows from the valley of Must-lie-flat to the heights of Can-sit-up, more and more of his kingdom came into view across the window ledge, until finally he had it all back again—flowers and fountain and sun-splashed lawn where the babies played.

It had been a steep, hard climb, and once or twice he had wanted—oh, so much!—to slip back into the valley where a great sleep waited; but always it had seemed to him that he must go on, because he alone possessed the key to the park and if he slipped back, the great adventure would never be finished and the other children would look with wistful faces through the iron gates until the end of the world.

He was on his fourth pillow now, which, as every sick person knows, is the next thing to sitting up. To-morrow—or the day after—he would be well enough to go back and gather up the loose ends of his shattered enterprise.

The playroom door opened softly, and into the room, for the first time since he had lain among the pillows, came the queen regent, a letter in her hand. The blue-and-white nurse rose, nodded, and slipped away. Miss Philomena was alone with her lesser charity.

The doctor had warned her that he would be very pale against his mountains, but she had not been prepared to find him so *small*. A few feet from the bed she stopped abruptly and looked down at him with stricken eyes. Her breath caught in her throat. Her heart seemed stifled with tears.

"Oh!" whispered Miss Philomena.

The king turned his head. Their glances met. For a moment the woman who had played at being a mother stood

motionless, facing the high court of a child's blue gaze. Then somehow she was on her knees beside him, her arm beneath his shoulders, her cheek against his.

"My baby! My baby!"

The king lay very still, afraid almost to breathe lest he should undo this miracle. He was filled with a strange and beautiful happiness. He felt that the barriers between them, the great wall of misunderstanding, had been suddenly, mysteriously whisked away. And so he did not move, did not speak; only nestled there in the hollow of her arm.

"Is there anything—you would like?"

"I like—this."

"They wouldn't let me come before—but I'll come often now. I'm going to take care of you—always!"

His free arm stole up and fastened about her neck.

"Why did you run away?"

"There was no one—to play with."

"And were you very lonely?"

The yellow head upon her shoulder moved slightly in assent. Miss Philomena's arm tightened about him.

"How did you ever find those other children?"

"I used to see them—peekin' through the fence—and I went and found them."

Miss Philomena glanced through the open window at the king's country, lying green in the sun. A picture of that ragged pilgrimage composed itself in her mind. She saw the adventurers marching, with the king at their head. And then, by some whimsical trick of the imagination, another picture rose before her eyes—a picture of the fat bishop in the robe of Moses leading his hypothetical thousands into a theatrical paradise, holding up his robe as he walked. And she saw quite clearly which of these two pictures was true and good, which hypocritical and false.

Then, with a little laugh, she rose

and held out to the king an envelope upon which was written, in scrawling characters, his own name.

"A letter for you! I'd forgotten all about it."

"Who's it from?"

"I'm sure I could never guess. Shall I open it?"

"Yes."

So Miss Philomena sat down upon the edge of the bed and broke the seal of the mysterious envelope. Within was a letter that I shall set forth, with a historian's privilege, in full:

DEER FRIEND: I am fine how are you. Are you wel yet. I am in the hospittle. It is grand. Ther is nobudy in the room but me and it is swel with flours in a vace and I had ice creem 3 times since I came. Wat do you have. I am not sick but they is sumthing on my leg to make it wel. I had an operashun, it was fine. It didnt hurt. The doctor comes to see me evry day and its him thats makeing me wel. He told me about you and I cent my luvve to you. I will klose now and oblige

MAGGIE O'CONNOR.

p. s. I rote this bye myself.

"What a beautiful letter!" cried Miss Philomena.

For some time the king did not speak; then he said:

"Won't Maggie be lame any more?"

"The doctor isn't sure yet," replied Miss Philomena gently, "but he hopes she'll be better. And now suppose we answer Maggie's letter. I'll get pen and ink, and you can think up things to say."

So the king lay back among his snowy mountains and thought up things to say. There were so many, many things now, and such happy things! But, curiously enough, when the paper was brought, he found he could not say them, after all.

Miss Philomena sat with the writing pad propped against her knees, the pen poised.

"We'll begin: 'Dear Maggie.' There! Now what?"

"How are you?" suggested the king.

"How—are—you?" repeated the secretary, putting it down.

"How is your leg?"

"How—is—your—leg?"

"Is it well yet?"

"Is—it—well—yet?"

Silence. The king moved restlessly upon his pillows. It was no simple matter writing to a lady. Finally he looked at his collaborator.

"You think up something," said the king.

Miss Philomena nibbled her pen, which is always productive of inspiration.

"Suppose we say: 'I am going to give a party.' Would you like that?"

"I'd love it! Can I invite Mickey and Benny and Heinie Schmidt and all the O'Connors?"

"Every one of them!"

"Can I ask the bad woman, too?"

Miss Philomena put down her writing pad.

"Who is—the bad woman?"

Very simply the king told her. He described the drunken man, and the laugh-with-hands. Then he told how he had run against the bad woman's skirt in the dark; how she had taken him home, and given him ice cream for supper, and pancakes with sirup the next morning.

"She isn't bad really," concluded the king. "That's just her name."

"Oh!" said Miss Philomena.

A month ago, she would have turned in horror from the very thought of extending hospitality to such a person—except in a purely charitable way—but now she faced the thought with a strange, new humility; a humility dating from that unforgettable moment in the hall when the doctor had paused, with the king in his arms, to look into her eyes. Fortunately for progress, it does not take days and years to produce the revolutions of the human soul. Such changes may be wrought in the white heat of a single second. So Miss

Philomena had changed, almost unconsciously, and under the guidance of the doctor's look, had begun to grope her way into the true world of sympathy and understanding.

"If she was kind to you," said Miss Philomena, "she shall come to the party."

So it was decided that the king's levee should include a bad woman, and the construction of Maggie's letter was concluded, with many references to the impending party and the closing assurance that there would be chocolate ice cream in quantities.

"That's a splendid letter!" said Miss Philomena, folding the completed missive. "It ought to make little Maggie jump out of bed and dance a jig."

"What's this talk about jigs?"

They looked up and saw the tall doctor striding toward them, his hands in his trousers pockets, his shaggy brows contracted in a ferocious frown.

"Come," said he, advancing to the bed, "out with it! What have you two been plotting together?"

The king laughed in appreciation of the doctor's droll face; but Miss Philomena fled to the door, where she turned and glanced back defiantly.

"We've been plotting paradises," said Miss Philomena, and flung a kiss to the king with either hand.

An hour later, when the doctor descended from the playroom, he found her seated at her desk in the library, thoughtfully turning the pages of a small notebook.

"The boy is doing very nicely," said the doctor. "Very nicely. I shall have him up by Thanksgiving, at least."

"Thanksgiving!"

"Exactly. You don't seem to realize that it's almost a miracle—having him up at all."

Miss Philomena was trembling as she faced him.

"I realize—more than you think. I realize that you've given him life, and



Never in all the history of the alley was there such a home-coming as this!

that you've given me—something even dearer!"

"Nonsense!" said the doctor, but his voice had lost its harsh note.

Miss Philomena smiled.

"I'm not afraid of you any more. I know now that you're not"—her voice sank to a whisper—"a pagan."

"What am I, then?"

"You're only a practicing Christian."

"Hump!" said the doctor, and rubbed his nose violently.

She came close to him, the notebook in her hand.

"That day—in the hall—when you looked at me," she faltered. "I will never forget——"

"I've been very sorry about that," said the doctor abruptly.

"You needn't be. It was an extremely *medicinal* look, a trifle hard to take, but very beneficial in its results."

"Philomena!"

She held the notebook out to him, smiling a little.

"Do you recognize this?"

The doctor bent to scan the pages; then straightened up again.

"Bless me, I'd forgotten! The resolution!"

"I was to decide between this and—the other—within a month. The month is up to-day."

"It's not a great matter, as the world goes," said the doctor gruffly.

"No, it's not a great matter, though I believe I once thought that civilization couldn't do without our resolutions. But it's very important to me, because it means that I must decide, not between two theories of life, but between two lives, two—men." Her face flushed, but she went on bravely: "I have made my decision."

"Well?"

She put her hands to her cheeks—dropped them again with a sudden passionate gesture.

"Oh," she whispered, "if you had suggested that we draw down the stars, I would have decided for that—because it was you——"

"I've always known that you would love me some day," said the doctor.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Terence O'Connor, Democratic nominee for alderman from the Gas-house Ward, sat reading a morning paper in the rear room of the congenial saloon. Mr. Fogarty, the green derby over one ear, the yellow elastics clasp ing his shirt sleeves, occupied a chair on the opposite side of the table. Between the two gentlemen stood a convivial pitcher of beer. Politics, in this land of high ideals, is a dry business.

"I'm tellin' ye," said Mr. O'Connor, slapping the newspaper with the back of his hand, "'tis me own platform they've adopted."

Mr. Fogarty glanced at his candidate in pained surprise.

"I'm havin' a speech wrote," said Mr. Fogarty, "by a man who's in the business. You learn that speech, Terence—and leave the rest to me and the boys. You don't need a platform any more than you need a furrin policy."

"Gen'rally speakin'," replied Mr. O'Connor gently, "ye are a man of sense, and a fine politician. There's not

a ward boss in town can get more votes out of a man than you, Dan Fogarty. But in the case of me platform, you're wrong."

"Because why?" demanded Mr. Fogarty, not unmollified by the compliments heaped upon him.

"Because, by announcin' it, I'll have the best people in Noo York behind me."

"Sure you will," said Mr. Fogarty. "You'll have me and the organization."

"I mean the class, Dan, the top-liners, the so-ciety swells."

"What in hell has society got to do with politics?" roared Mr. Fogarty disgustedly.

Mr. O'Connor looked at the dispenser of nominations with a slightly superior smile.

"What has flypaper got to do with catchin' flies?" retorted Mr. O'Connor enigmatically. Then he leaned earnestly toward his sponsor. "Ye're a good politician, Dan, and when ye say ye'll put a man across, ye'll usually put him across. But there's no use overlookin' a chancet like this. Ye said yerself that ye couldn't spend much money on the boys this year."

"No," replied Mr. Fogarty gloomily. "It'll be slim pickin's for the Gas House on Dough Day."

"Next to a good fat campaign fund," said Mr. O'Connor, "what's the best thing a candidate can have, Dan?"

"Backin'," said Mr. Fogarty, out of large experience.

Mr. O'Connor brought his fist down upon the table.

"Backin's what I'll have. And 'twill be the best backin' in the country!" He picked up the newspaper, opened it, and glanced impressively at the ward boss. "Listen to this, Dan Fogarty."

The article that Mr. O'Connor read, with many significant pauses and some stumbling over unfriendly words, is hereby appended, under its own caption:

BRING COUNTRY TO CITY, SAYS
CHARITY CONFERENCE.

Annual Resolution Contains Novel Plea.

Miss Philomena van Zandt, president of the United Charities and prominent society leader, to-day gave out for publication the resolution adopted at the meeting of the conference a month ago. Miss van Zandt explained that publication of the instrument had been delayed because of illness in her household.

The resolution itself is the briefest yet put forth by the conference. It suggests merely that "the country be brought to the city." The president, however, in an interview with the reporters explained and elaborated this somewhat startling idea.

"What we had in mind," said Miss van Zandt, "was the launching of a campaign to bring light and air and beauty to the slums of great cities. We decided that it was quite impossible to move the city into the country, so, like Mahomet and his mountain, we determined to bring the country to the city."

"Theoretically," continued the charities' head, "sunlight and fresh air are free to all the world. As a matter of fact, they are not free at all. They have been gobbled up by the wealthy classes, along with a thousand other privileges. As a result, the poor have had to be content with soot and shadows."

"We do not imagine that our resolution will induce the world to change its habits in a day. But we feel that it is a move in the right direction. Logically extended, the idea would include the establishment of a scientifically apportioned system of playgrounds, the opening of all parks to the public, and the revision of the building code with a view to eliminating the present prison-cell tenelements."

Mr. O'Connor laid down the paper with a dramatic wave of his hand.

"What is it all about?" asked Mr. Fogarty, whose brain cells were not accustomed to provide asylum for words over two syllables.

Mr. O'Connor took a long pull at the pitcher. Thus refreshed, he proceeded to enlighten Mr. Fogarty.

"Leavin' out the tongue twisters," said Mr. O'Connor, "'tis me platform. Free air, free light, free——"

"Beer?" suggested Mr. Fogarty, eying the pitcher.

Mr. O'Connor ignored this irrelevancy.

"Sunshine for all, fresh air for all—how would that sound in a speech, Dan Fogarty? How would that sound out here on the corner, where the soot is so thick ye can cut it with a knife and the stink of gas makes ye want to stop breathin' at all?"

"It would sound pretty good," admitted Mr. Fogarty, with a reflective gleam in his eyes.

"And a place for the childer to play in! How would that sound to the East Side, Dan, where the price of runnin' the streets is a funeral a day?"

"You got brains, Terence," said Mr. Fogarty grudgingly. "But where does this connect with the champagne back-in'?"

"I'll get the swells to indorse me," explained Mr. O'Connor, in a hoarse whisper. "I'll go call on this Miss Philippine van Zandt and tell her that our platforms is one and the same! She'll come out for Terence O'Connor for alderman! Me picture will be in all the papers! The reporters will be after me thick as flies! Will I be elected, Dan Fogarty?"

Mr. Fogarty extended his hand in silent admiration.

"I've picked many a man for office," said he, "but never before have I picked one with brains enough to elect himself."

Mr. O'Connor waved his hand.

"I'll call on Miss Philippine to-morrow."

"D'you know the lady?" inquired Mr. Fogarty doubtfully.

"She will recognize the name," said Mr. O'Connor. Then he added, more explicitly: "'Twas her that sent little Maggie home in the autymobile a month ago."

"We'll have some cards printed," announced Mr. Fogarty, whose enthusiasm, once aroused, knew no bounds, "and charge it to campaign expenses. I

know a jobber that does first-class work at a dollar a hundred."

"Do ye know what color pants goes with a frock coat, Dan?" asked Mr. O'Connor anxiously.

"I have a book that tells," answered Mr. Fogarty, rising and going to the bar. From beneath a pile of cigar boxes he drew a gaudy pamphlet, whose cover was dedicated to the virtues of a certain old-corn whisky. Upon turning this cover, however, one discovered that the pamphlet was in reality a "Social Guide and Gents' Etiquette."

"I knew this would come in handy some day," said Mr. Fogarty, turning the pages, "though the whisky is rotten bad. Here we are. 'Afternoon Wear for Gents.'" He read aloud: "'The frock coat is considered refined for afternoon wear in the upper circles of society.'" Mr. Fogarty paused and glanced at Mr. O'Connor. "That's us," said Mr. Fogarty.

"I knew as much meself," replied Mr. O'Connor. "Get on to the pants."

Mr. Fogarty read further:

"Pants should be worn——"

"'Tis customary!"

"——should be worn light or dark accordin' to whether the function is a reception or a funeral. Gray with a black stripe is the genteel thing for teas, party calls, and so forth."

"Gray with a black stripe it is! I'll rent a pair from Boris Maxman. What does it say about hats, Dan?"

Mr. Fogarty turned a page.

"Haberdashery — Handkerchiefs — Hair Cuts—*Hats*. The high silk hat is worn with the frock coat——"

"I will look like a dook," said Mr. O'Connor.

"Shoes," continued Mr. Fogarty, "'should be black, with gray or tan tops.'"

Mr. O'Connor thrust out a huge foot and surveyed its incasing leather with a speculative eye. Mr. Fogarty closed the pamphlet and pushed back his chair.

"We'll go round up the war paint," said Mr. Fogarty.

With a sigh for the still unemptied pitcher, Mr. O'Connor rose and followed his political ally into the street.

Boris Maxman's pawnshop was the first place visited. Here, after some close bargaining, Mr. O'Connor was outfitted with a pair of gray nether garments and a high silk hat. The price agreed upon was one dollar and twenty-five cents for the day, which, as Mr. Fogarty aptly observed, was cheaper than most campaign expenses. Then they sought out the jobber whose printing was first class at a dollar a hundred. This jobber rejoiced in the name of I. Lschtski, and was known vulgarly throughout the district as "Ish Ka Bibble." He took Mr. O'Connor's order with an air of sadness natural to one whose name is never pronounced correctly.

"Please to write what you want on the card," said I. Lschtski, presenting Mr. O'Connor with pen, ink, and a blank bit of pasteboard.

Mr. O'Connor spread his elbows, flourished the pen, and wrote in a bold hand:

Terence O'Connor, Esq.

"Any extra charge for the address?" asked Mr. Fogarty.

"No, sir," said the jobber.

"Put it down," said Mr. Fogarty.

Mr. O'Connor wrote, in the lower right-hand corner:

O'Connor's Alley, New York, N. Y.

"Now your politics," said Mr. Fogarty.

"What for?" demanded Mr. O'Connor.

"Advertising," said Mr. Fogarty.

"It ain't etiquette," objected Mr. O'Connor.

"Maybe not," said Mr. Fogarty, "but it's damn' good business." He took the pen from Mr. O'Connor's modest fingers and added:

Democratic Candidate for Alderman.

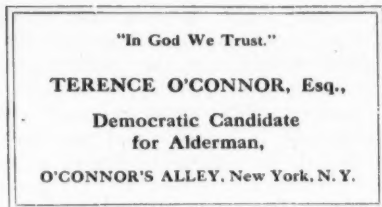
"It don't look so bad," said Mr. O'Connor, studying the card.

"We ought to have some sort of a motto on it," mused Mr. Fogarty, "like 'Vote for O'Connor,' or——"

"'In God We Trust,'" suggested Mr. O'Connor.

"Fine!" said Mr. Fogarty.

The statesman's card, as finally delivered into the hands of I. Lschtski, was as follows:



Then Mr. Fogarty, reflecting upon the glory that was Mr. O'Connor, felt himself irresistibly moved to an extravagance even more dignified than calling cards or gray trousers with a stripe. As they reached the door of the saloon, he paused and gazed appraisingly at Mr. O'Connor. A prophetic picture of his candidate, gray-trousered, frock-coated, silk-hatted, rose in his mind and overcame his instinctive weakness for political economy.

"Terence," said Mr. Fogarty, "you can't go on foot. For the honor of the ward and the glory of the Democratic Party, I'm goin' down to Devery's and hire a hack!"

CHAPTER XIX.

At four precisely of the following afternoon, there drew up before the Van Zandt residence in Gramercy Park North an open coach such as might have borne a king to his coronation. Attached to the victoria were two coal-black steeds, decorated with red ribbons, whose shining coats more than

atoned for the slight boniness of their bodies, the obvious profusion of their ribs.

Upon the rear seat of the carriage, one arm flung nonchalantly across the back of it, reclined a huge gentleman in frock coat and silk hat, whose carelessly crossed legs displayed gray trousers with a stripe, whose face wore an expression of heroic ease. As the equipage drew up at the curb, the huge gentleman got up, smoothed the skirts of his coat, and stood, a statue of refinement, while the driver climbed down and, according to previous rehearsal, opened the door for his distinguished passenger.

"Drive up and down in front of the house," said Mr. O'Connor, sotto voce, "so they can see what I came in."

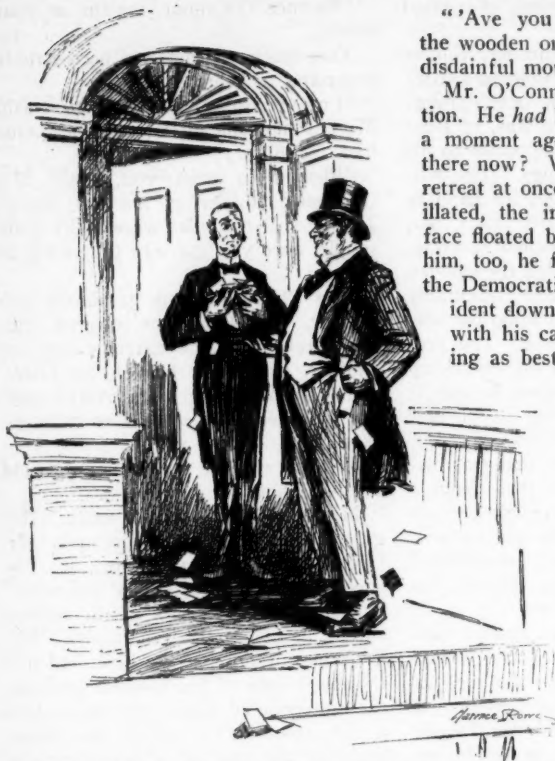
The driver, a sour individual and a Republican, smiled cynically at the vanity of this command. But he did not disobey it. He was a driver for Devery's even before he was a Republican.

Mr. O'Connor mounted the brown-stone steps with a sense of having attained, by that brief ascent, the upper circles of society. Boldly he rang the bell. Then ensued that period of waiting which leads even the most practiced caller to recite his greetings, to adjust his tie, to plan his bows, to mobilize his manners, to fumble nervously for his cards.

"Cards!" muttered Mr. O'Connor, grasping his trousers pocket. "Don't forget. Cards to every one. Don't forget. Cards!"

At last, just as he was beginning to face that dreadful question as to whether he should, or should not, ring the bell a second time, footsteps sounded beyond the portal. Mr. O'Connor broke into a gentle perspiration. The door swung open.

Upon the threshold of the upper circles, staring coldly at Mr. O'Connor, stood an ancient man who might have been carved out of wood, so expres-



"Here," said Mr. O'Connor. "Take a couple for yerself, and give the rest to yer friends."

sionless were his features, so lifeless his limbs. But more chilling than this inhuman woodenness—more chilling, indeed, than anything the mind could imagine—was the appalling novelty of the man's apparel. He was wearing a full-dress suit!

An awful fear smote Mr. O'Connor. Had the "Social Guide" been wrong about afternoon wear for gents? Had he been misled by a lying, cheating, infamously deceitful whisky advertisement? His gray trousers with a stripe—were they malapropos, unrefined? His frock coat—was it out of fashion? In short, was his glory a false bloom?

"'Ave you business 'ere?" asked the wooden one, suddenly opening its disdainful mouth.

Mr. O'Connor considered the question. He *had* had business there, until a moment ago, but had he business there now? Would it not be wiser to retreat at once? But even as he vacillated, the image of Mr. Fogarty's face floated before his eyes. Behind him, too, he felt the whole weight of the Democratic Party, from the president down. He would go forward with his call at all costs, apologizing as best he might for the mistake in raiment.

"I wish to see the lady of the house," said Mr. O'Connor courageously.

"'Ave you a card?"

Mr. O'Connor's heart leaped in his bosom. In this respect, at least, he felt himself to be fortified against the caprices of etiquette.

"I have a whole raft of them," said Mr. O'Connor.

In proof of this statement, he put his hand into his pocket

—his, at least, for the afternoon—and produced a prodigal package of cards. I. Lschtski had done his work well. The cards were beautiful evidences of the printer's art.

"Here," said Mr. O'Connor. "Take a couple for yerself, and give the rest to yer friends."

Simms fell back in dismay, his cupped hands dribbling pasteboards.

"Oo did you want to see?" he gasped.

"The lady of the house."

"'Ave you an appointment?"

Mr. O'Connor waved his hand.

"She will know the name," he stated loftily.

At this confident assurance, Simms unbent a trifle. Miss Philomena's charitable connections often bore strange fruit. Perhaps this man was, in some incomprehensible way, important to his mistress' scheme of things. The butler promptly stretched out his hand to take Mr. O'Connor's silk hat. Mr. O'Connor promptly snatched it away. Then, realizing too late that the wooden one's gesture had been hospitably meant, he fairly thrust it upon the butler, who fumbled the pass. The precious silk hat fell with a hollow thump on the floor. Both stooped to pick it up, with the embarrassing result that their heads met forcibly above it. Mr. O'Connor uttered a word that was distinctly not etiquette, but that, from a merely human standpoint, might be considered pardonable under the circumstances. The butler, with a smothered groan, backed rapidly into the hall, his hands pressed to his brow.

Mr. O'Connor sat down upon a brocade chair and smoothed the ruffled plumage of his hired hat. So far, his call had not been the social success that he had planned. But with the Democratic Party behind him, he would see it through, come what might. Incidentally he heaped anathema upon the wooden one, whose head seemed to have been made of the same stuff as the rest of him.

Then down the stairs came a lady in rustling silks, a lady who smiled and held out to him a hand whiter than Mr. O'Connor had ever dreamed a hand could be.

"It's little Maggie's father, isn't it?"

Mr. O'Connor rose from his chair and, mindful of a line in the "Gents' Etiquette," took Miss Philomena's hand in the tips of his blundering fingers, raised it to the height of the lady's chin, wagged it weakly, and then—dropped it.

"Terence O'Connor, ma'am, at your service."

That much, at least, had been strictly according to rule.

"I'm very glad to meet you," said Miss Philomena. "Won't you come into the library?"

"Pleased to meet you," said Mr. O'Connor, following her on tiptoe. These social formulas were really quite simple, once you got into the swing of them.

Miss Philomena sank gracefully into a chair. Mr. O'Connor lowered himself carefully to the extreme edge of another, placed his hat on his knees, and fished wildly for the sartorial apology. Somehow it seemed to have escaped him.

"Warm weather we're havin'," said Mr. O'Connor.

Miss Philomena did not reply. Her gaze had fallen by chance upon Mr. O'Connor's shoes, and there was no speech in her. The "Gents' Etiquette" had said that the boots of the blessed should be black with tan uppers. Mr. O'Connor, following the hint, had had the lower half of his footgear polished the conventional black, the upper half a rich russet. The effect was something in the way of a departure for footgear.

"I feel the heat somethin' fierce," said Mr. O'Connor.

Miss Philomena, with an exclamation of sympathy, rose and rang for Simms. When that dignitary appeared, she ordered iced tea for two.

"I would have worn my swallow-tail," said Mr. O'Connor, nodding toward the receding Simms, "only I lent it to a friend."

The sartorial apology was out at last, and well out, too. Miss Philomena bowed her head and murmured that she quite understood. So there was an embarrassing business happily concluded.

Tea arrived, and under its stimulating influence Mr. O'Connor found

that discourse with a lady was not the difficult matter he had supposed. Miss Philomena, having asked for details of little Maggie's progress, Mr. O'Connor responded with inquiries for the king. Thus was provided that first necessity of social intercourse, a common topic of conversation.

Once met upon this ground, they fell to discussing the children's adventure. Mr. O'Connor was led to talk of the alley, which he did with a certain rich imaginativeness of his own. He described its poverty in the very terms of that poverty; painted with unconscious pathos its underlying sadness; touched upon its need for a new life. And thus, in a most natural manner, he came to the purpose of his visit.

"Did ye read my card?" asked Mr. O'Connor.

"I—I glanced at it."

Mr. O'Connor extended a generous handful of the pasteboards. It had been especially impressed upon him by the "Social Guide" that he should not be niggardly with his calling cards.

"Just read what it says," he suggested modestly.

"In God We Trust," read Miss Philomena aloud, and with some bewilderment.

"I mean—the name, ma'am." Mr. O'Connor leaned forward and placed a large forefinger on the spot.

"Oh, I see. 'Democratic Candidate for Alderman.' You, Mr. O'Connor?"

"The same," said Mr. O'Connor.

"I congratulate you," replied Miss Philomena, smiling and making him a little bow.

Mr. O'Connor fumbled the silk hat in his great hands.

"I guess yer 'wonderin' why I came, ma'am?"

"To see me, I hope, Mr. O'Connor."

"I came," said Mr. O'Connor desperately, "to ask ye to indorse me for alderman."

"I? Indorse you?"

Mr. O'Connor, being at a loss for words, tossed his hat into the air and caught it dexterously. After which he looked at Miss Philomena and nodded.

"I'm afraid I don't understand."

"Very few does, ma'am," said Mr. O'Connor reassuringly. "It's politics." Then, bending forward until the knees of the rented trousers creaked under the strain, Mr. O'Connor explained the identity of their respective causes. "I see by the paper," he said, "that ye are in favor of reformin' the slums. More sunshine and good air. More parks for the childer to play in——"

"Yes," said Miss Philomena, with sudden interest.

Mr. O'Connor waved his hand.

"'Tis me platform."

"Your platform?"

"The same, ma'am."

"You mean—that if you are elected alderman, you will work for these reforms?"

"I will."

"And you think that I could help you?"

"I do, ma'am."

"In just what way?"

"By writin' a letter to the papers, ma'am, indorsin' me for alderman. That would give me the backin' of all the charity sw—people, ma'am, and in politics, 'tis the backin' elects the man."

"Then tell me what to say," cried Miss Philomena, "and I'll say it!"

Mr. O'Connor seized the hand held out to him, and this time, etiquette forgot, he shook it heartily.

"Ye're a gentleman!" said Mr. O'Connor.

CHAPTER XX.

The king sat by the playroom window, engaged in the pleasant and interesting occupation of licking stamps. A grate fire crackled cheerily upon the white tile hearth. Miss Philomena sat near by, a small stand at her side, and

upon the stand a pile of envelopes and beautiful engraved cards, which read:

Miss van Zandt
requests the pleasure of

company at a Thanksgiving Dinner
on Thursday, the twenty-fourth of November,
at one o'clock.

It was Miss Philomena's task to fill in the blank line with the name of the guest, and to address the invitations. It was the king's duty and privilege to lick the stamps and affix them to the snowy envelopes.

"Dear me," said Miss Philomena, with a laugh, "I've been writing for ten minutes and I haven't finished with the O'Connors. What a wonderful family they must be!"

The king removed a stamp from the tip of his tongue.

"When are you going to marry the doctor?" he asked.

"Very soon, your majesty."

"Would you mind," said the king, "having as many children as the O'Connors?"

Miss Philomena bent her head above the envelopes.

"I'll try," she answered humbly.

"If you could have mostly boys," suggested the king, "it would make a peach of an army!"

So it was agreed that Miss Philomena was to have mostly boys, and that point settled, they went back to their tasks with a new understanding.

Within that hour invitations were duly inscribed and addressed to the O'Connors, the Goronivinskis, the Graziolas, the two Fogarty girls, the Farinas, the six Maxmans, Benny Erns-picker, Yetta Horowitz, the Costellos, the Einsteins, the Murphys, and the Schmidts. This list had been compiled by the versatile doctor, who, after a

clever bit of detective work, had obtained the names of the king's citizens and—*mirabile dictu!*—the spelling of those names. But, for all his cleverness, there had been one name that he had not been able to discover. Hence, when Miss Philomena reached the end of her list, she found herself in something of a quandary; for it would never do to say that Miss van Zandt requested the pleasure of a bad woman's company at Thanksgiving dinner!

"I think I shall have to write her a note," observed Miss Philomena, at last, "and ask the doctor to deliver it."

This plan having met with the approval of the king, Miss Philomena wrote the bad woman a kind and friendly and altogether beautiful note, which she folded and placed in an un-addressed envelope.

The doctor stood in the center of the library, scowling and grumbling like a pent volcano, his arms fairly loaded with newspapers. More newspapers bulged from his pockets. Still others lay scattered about the floor. Miss Philomena, coming suddenly upon this scene from the outer hall, paused in dismay.

"Peter! What are you doing with all those— Please don't look like a Prussian! What have I done?"

"Done?" roared the doctor. "You've got your name into every paper in town!" With a grim chuckle he began to spread out his journals upon the table, opening them one by one. "Look at this! 'Candidate for Alderman Indorsed by Society Woman.' 'O'Connor Backed By United Charities Head.' 'Miss van Zandt Advises East Side to Vote for O'Connor.' 'O'Connor Now Sure of Election.' 'Would Paint City Green'—a congenial task for an Irishman! There's something in every one of them."

"Oh," cried Miss Philomena, "it worked!"

The doctor glanced at her in meek despair.

"So it was a plot, eh?"

Miss Philomena put her hands upon his shoulders and forced him into a chair; then sat upon the arm of it.

"Some time ago," she said, "I received a call from a gentleman, a most premeditated and gorgeous call. Oh, Peter, if you could have seen him! He came in an open coach—I'm sure it's a funeral carriage in its lighter moments—and he—he apologized for not wearing a swallowtail coat!"

"Hump!" said the doctor. "Did he ask you to indorse him?"

Miss Philomena nodded.

"He said it would help him, and it seemed such a little thing. You really don't mind, do you, Peter?"

"Lord bless you, no! If he means what he says, I'll back him myself. As a matter of fact, I've already dropped a hint to an editor friend of mine."

"Peter! You fraud!"

The doctor chuckled.

"Why not? This fellow O'Connor is advocating the very reforms of our immortal resolution. And after all, he's little Maggie's father—and an alderman's salary is fifteen hundred a year."

Miss Philomena raised the doctor's hand to her lips.

"You utter fraud!"

She was no longer sitting upon the arm of the chair.

CHAPTER XXI.

In her room above the unmentionable byway, the bad woman sat forging a cardboard crown. It was a shining task, and as she cut and trimmed and pasted, she sang, unconsciously, such small, meaningless fragments as women sing in the twilight:

"Baby, baby, is it you
Peering in at me again?"

The gaslight flickered in the drafts that pierced the room. The autumn

night had brought a chill wind to the street, and such defenses as the bad woman could muster against it were sadly insufficient. But she continued her work, scarcely feeling the cold, until the cardboard crown was quite complete. She had covered it with a lumpy tinsel that glittered in the dimness like beaten gold.

Some time later she put on her hat and coat, wrapped the glistening crown in the newspaper, and turned out the light. At the door, a blast of cold air smote her face. She gasped, like a swimmer facing the sea, and then plunged on down the familiar stairs.

As she reached the sidewalk, a man muffled in a long overcoat came striding through the hazy zone of a street lamp directly toward the door she had just quitted. Instinctively she crouched against the wall, hiding the cardboard crown beneath her coat. The man entered the unlighted hallway, pausing on the threshold to strike a match. The stairs creaked loudly as he mounted them.

She stole back to the entrance and listened. Distinctly she heard the sound of a knock. A brief wait, and the knock was repeated, more vigorously. Then another match flared, and the man came down, grumbling to himself. She stood, a shadow among shadows, watching him. As he passed once more beneath the street lamp, she saw him thrust a white envelope into the pocket of his greatcoat.

Shivering, she waited until the darkness had hidden him. Then, feeling quite brave, she went on, smiling and singing her fragments of song.

She walked westward, keeping well within the shadow of the ragged walls. There were but few wayfarers abroad, and these she avoided by accustomed small ruses. She had placed the crown beneath her coat to keep it safe from harm.

The street moaned with the wind.



They would never laugh at her again! She was as God might have fashioned her in His moments of holiest creation, straight-limbed and beautiful—and free!

Stinging flakes of snow touched her cheek like little knives; but a strange numbness in her body dulled their dancing blades. A tree, almost naked, stood tossing against the sky. She saw the wet gleam of iron pickets marching in a yellow blur of light. She skirted the hem of the park, her head bowed, one arm half lifted to shield her face. Once she stopped and, seizing two of the pickets in her hands, shook them impotently, with wordless cries. Then, frightened by the sound of her own voice, she shrank away, glancing fearfully about her. But there was none to see her mad assault upon the iron barriers of respectability. She crossed the street and began to peer for numbers. Twice she mounted strange and icy steps, only to scurry back again, like a wild thing. But at last she found the house.

Standing in the vestibule, she drew forth the cardboard crown. The courage that had almost died out of her leaped up again. She rang the bell. The door opened. A manservant stood peering into the black night.

She took a step forward, holding out to him her precious burden. A sudden fillip of wind caught the dragged end of the newspaper and stripped it from the thing of paste and tinsel. The man drew back, startled by the white face that smiled from the dark.

"Take it," said the woman. "It's a crown, for him—for the little boy."

She pressed it into his fumbling hands. For a moment they remained facing each other, the prim, horrified butler, the pale, drenched, unreasonably smiling woman.

"Say—the very good bad woman. Don't forget. And say—good-by."

She turned swiftly and stumbled down the steps, her hands over her ears to shut out the sound of that closing door.

The snow was like a great white beast that came at her in a thousand shapes, disintegrating as it came. The wind beat her soaked garments flat against her burning flesh. But she got on somehow, threading the maze of streets by instinct, like a blind hare. Suddenly, after ages of the cold and the wet, she found herself standing in the street opposite her own door, staring up at her blotted window. And as she looked, an overwhelming repugnance rose within her, sweeping her back and away from all that she had been. Her mind revolted at the thought of those hideous creaking stairs, that empty mockery of a room. She started forward again, her hands held out before her like the hands of a person who is blind.

The street raveled out between buildings tall and dark—stopped short like a thing tired of its journey. She saw the black hulk of a barge and the dull gleam of the river beyond—and went toward it.

Beneath her feet the huge barge groaned and trembled like a shaken world. She lifted her arms to the hidden heavens with a cry:

"I have done all that I can do!"

And after that the river, moving imperturbably to the sea.

CHAPTER XXII.

The king was coming down the stairs.

All through the house sped that happy bulletin, from cellar to garret, until the kitchen maids ran in to the hall with smiling faces, and the stout cook abandoned her pie crust to peep from the butler's pantry. Even Simms, the wooden one, exhibited a certain sprightliness at the news.

The king himself was a sight for better than kitchen maids. He was clad in a black Eton jacket, a white starched collar, and dark-gray trousers that reached quite to his ankles. His legs, which had developed a regrettable tendency to wobble, took new courage from these splendid garments of manhood. The starched collar, it must be confessed, was a grievance to his neck, but he had promised to say nothing of it if Miss Philomena would permit him the trousers. So the bargain had been struck, and this Thanksgiving Day found him descending the stairs in man's attire and an inexpressible happiness.

Before him marched a white-and-blue nurse, carrying rugs and pillows, for the king was to sit in an armchair by the window and await the arrival of his guests. There was some secret about their coming, some mystery, which, try as he would, he could not wring from Miss Philomena and the doctor. They had formed a partnership against him, a partnership of winks and nods and portentous silences that added a tantalizing flavor to the joy of the day.

Behind him came Miss Philomena, bearing a cardboard crown, which, according to Simms, had been left at the door by a mad woman, the night of the great storm. But both Miss Philomena and the king had known who was meant, and had dispatched the doctor a second time with the kind and friendly note. This time he had left it under the bad woman's door.

A rosy light, falling through the stained glass at the end of the hall, laid a golden carpet for the king's progress. The somber library, too, was dimly aglow. Shafts of sunlight struck unexpected tints from satin and luminous mahogany. There was no trace of last week's storm. The world lay sparkingly beyond the window.

Within the house were odors sweeter

than the spice of Ind. The faint suggestion of roasting turkey floated upon the air, and the fragrance of mince-meat baking between brown crusts, of squash pies, of creamed potatoes, of sage, spice, and cranberry, of sauces, gravies, and garnishings. Through the half-opened door of the dining room, the king caught a glimpse of the long table, with its gleaming silver, its spotless cloth, its mysterious favors tied with red ribbon, its banked flowers, its trimmings, decorations, and adornments. Oh, those beautiful Thanksgiving Day tables of our childhood! How white they were, how shining, how friendly with clustered chairs! What visions they bring to mind! What memories of vanished faces! They are of the stuff of dreams, those tables. Once their magic circle is broken, it can never be mended again.

The king sat throned by the window, and looked out at the little park, asleep in the sun. The blue-and-white nurse, having arranged and rearranged the pillows, tiptoed from the room. Miss Philomena knelt down and, placing the crown upon the king's head, kissed him. Then began a conversation that, with slight alteration, had occurred a dozen times that morning.

"What time is it now?" asked the king.

"A quarter to one, your majesty."

"Are they *all* coming?"

"Yes, your majesty."

"Mr. and Mrs. O'Connor?"

"Yes, your majesty."

"Is Mr. O'Connor elected now?"

"Yes, your majesty."

"Is Maggie O'Connor——"

The unfinished question was never answered. For at that moment, out of the murmur of the day's voices, there came the unmistakable low beat of a drum:

A-rub-a-dub-dub! A-rub-a-dub-dub!

"What's that?" asked the king, with a little indrawn breath.

Miss Philomena feigned indifference.

"It sounds like a parade," she said.

The sound grew louder. Now was heard a faint, breathy music, not unlike the shrilling of a firsthand harmonicon. The king pressed his face to the window, entirely disregarding the cost to his nose.

And then, across the square, he saw them coming, two by two—Mickey and his men!

A-rub-a-dub-dub! A-rub-a-dub-dub! Tra, la, la, la, la!

Play now, O bandsmen, and march your bravest, O ranks, for yonder in the window stands the king, crowned with a priceless crown, and his eyes are shining for pride of you!

On they came, a martial host of wooden swords, familiar and yet how changed! For instead of ragged jacket and bare brown foot was now an extravagance of starch, a profusion of neatly patched garments, a reckless glistening of shoe leather.

"Mickey Flynn's got a collar on!"

It was true. Mickey Flynn would have been the first to confess his gear. He wore a collar that might have graced the neck of an emperor—a standing collar with wings that made it almost a flying collar; a collar three sizes too large and a size too tall; but a distinguished, dazzling collar for all that!

Benny Ernspicker was brave in a coat with satin facings; a coat that bagged loosely from his shoulders to his thin calves and interfered materially with his progress.

Heinie Schmidt wore a blue sailor suit that threatened to give up the struggle of containing his stout body at any moment. Aware of this cowardly weakening, he marched with mincing steps, conserving his raiment for the further strain soon to be put upon it.

The Fogarty girls had come in pink gingham, as was their wont. Susie

Costello was a rainbow of ribbons and sashes. Sadie Goronivinski, for once relieved of the infant Goronivinski, walked beneath the spreading splendor of a silk umbrella, which had been devastated by some unknown gale, rescued from the ash heap, and repaired for use as a lady's parasol. The Graziolas wore white kid shoes and red stockings.

There was color aplenty, and no supercilious concealment of it; for, though the month was November, there were few overcoats in the ranks. The alley marched with glory all displayed. How the ribbons fluttered! How the faces shone! How the best shoes twinkled in the sun!

Behind the army, constituting a sort of dignified guard, rolled an open coach, whose graceful, flowing lines were accented by streamers of red, white, and blue bunting. This stately carriage was occupied by a newly elected alderman and his lady; she in flowered calico, with a black bonnet tied by strings beneath her chin; he in frock coat, gray trousers, and high silk hat.

They had reached the king's window at last. Suddenly Mickey turned and uttered a shrill command. The line wheeled in unison—O hours of practice eminently justified!—and proud eyes smiled up at the king, who clapped his hands and whistled impotent ecstasy. Mickey Flynn shrieked command, and the wooden swords leaped in salute.

Then, with a shout that rang through the square, O'Connor's Alley broke ranks and came pell-mell up the steps, laughing, crowding, stumbling, pushing—an excited company that stormed the

vestibule and utterly routed the precise Simms, who had aged these latter days.

The king turned from his window, and so did not see the taxicab that came bustling up to the curb a moment later. But Miss Philomena saw, and waved her handkerchief in welcome.

The library door was filled with sudden faces. The king had a bewildering impression of Mickey Flynn's collar, of Susie Costello's ribbons, of the Graziolas' red stockings, of Heinie Schmidt's distended small clothes, of Benny Ernsicker holding up his coat, of Mr. O'Connor beaming above the throng, of Mrs. O'Connor clinging to his arm and crying.

The front door slammed. Mrs. O'Connor's sobs became distinctly audible. Then, at the very crest of the silence, a footstep sounded in the hall and a great voice thundered:

"Her majesty, the queen!"

The crowd parted, and through a lane of hushed children came the tall doctor, with little Maggie O'Connor in his arms. Very gently he lowered her to the floor and stepped back.

She stood quite alone, quite unaided, gazing about her with eyes that seemed to gather happiness as bees gather honey. Her glance flitted from face to face, with a startled wonder, a dawning glory. They would never laugh at her again! She was as God might have fashioned her in His moments of holiest creation, straight-limbed and beautiful—and free!

She stood, in her white dress, looking at the boy by the window, the boy who had believed in fairy tales. And then, with transfigured face, little Maggie walked slowly across the room.





Minor Physical Defects

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

MANY painful deformities that mar the beauty and wreck the happiness of adult lives are preventable in childhood. This assertion cannot be made too often, yet it falls upon dull ears. Nevertheless, parents are awakening more and more each day to a realization of the duty they owe their children. We are upon the eve of the dawn of child culture. Perhaps the next generation will have a keener sense of responsibility respecting the physical well-being of its offspring.

Doubtless every one is familiar with the saying, "As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined," but as yet we apply it literally only to twigs of plants and to limbs of trees. When we apply it to human beings, it is used as a term of aspersion, referring to their shortcomings. An eminent surgeon, however, who has devoted his talents to the restoration of human "bent twigs," pronounced his specialty "the art of mak-

ing a child go straight." Many little ones come to us already marred in the making, and the time to begin treatment is at the hour of birth. Each day, until full stature is attained, makes any correction more difficult, and of course, after maturity is reached, defects have developed into deformities, more or less grave in nature.

Numberless children are daily mis-handled by rude nursemaids or ignorant mothers, and frequently seeds are sown that in after years show themselves in defects of one kind or another. Thus little ones are often forced to walk before the delicate limbs can support their weight; so bowlegs, knock-knees, weak ankles, and flatfoot are engendered. It is a common sight to see a woman dragging a weary tot by the hand, almost dislocating its shoulder in swinging it over crossings. Marked deformities of the joints often result from such inhuman treatment.

The most common disorder of early

childhood that gives rise to deformities is *rickets*. This is a condition that frequently results from malnutrition, and it is often overlooked by parents unless it is very marked. Twenty-five years ago it was thought to be comparatively rare among Americans, most of the cases seen in hospitals being those of foreign birth. But as ease, luxury, city living, and greater refinements of the table, are gradually taking the place of sturdy country life, with its plain, wholesome fare, this disorder has rapidly increased and is no longer confined to the unhygienic and the excessively poor.

The question of foods and food values has thrown a tremendous light upon this condition. One may have an abundance of highly refined food and yet be poorly nourished, and this has been the case with thousands of American children.

In rickets the bones are chiefly affected, with a lack of tone in the ligaments, causing pigeon breast, spinal curvature, bowlegs, knock-knees, flat-feet, and great muscular weakness. *It is distinctly a preventable condition.*

While rickets is the most pronounced disorder of childhood that gives rise to deformities, these conditions also result from general underfeeding, which causes poor development of the muscular system, because the same elements that make bone and cartilage are also necessary to muscles and blood. These are particularly carbonate and phosphate of lime.

A great deal is being said at present on the demineralization of grains, and this is what is meant—that the lime or mineral constituents are abstracted, leaving nothing to build up the structure of the body. Fresh raw milk of first quality, with whole-wheat bread, are absolutely essential foods for bone and muscle building. If we use foods as nature provides them, we constantly rebuild our blood—and through it the

bones, muscles, nerves, and brain—with the materials they require; but if we cast out the phosphate of lime and the carbonates—as we do in making fine white bread, for instance—we leave nothing to assist in the repair of these tissues.

The defects of infancy and early childhood are, then, almost always caused by malnutrition or by attempts at walking before sufficient strength has been acquired. Proper constitutional treatment, with an abundance of such foods as make bone and brawn, together with local measures, will arrest and correct these troubles. When knock-knees and bowlegs are allowed to go until full growth is reached or the bones have hardened, only operative treatment will avail.

Young girls in whom these defects exist should not wear the very short skirts now in vogue, as they reveal such malformations very unpleasantly. Knock-knees seem in greater or less degree to be exceedingly common in women. This fact might have gone unobserved did they not follow the present fad so blindly. Can it be that they are unconscious of their physical defects, or will they pursue the mode in defiance of the appearance they present?

In aggravated cases, the knees are inclined inward to so great an extent that the leg from hip to ankle forms a bow, with the knees touching each other. The deformity disappears when the knees are bent so as to bring the legs at right angles to the thighs. Those so troubled are poor pedestrians, walking or standing to any extent giving rise to considerable discomfort, even pain. While the gait is not waddling, as it is in the case of bowlegs, it is utterly lacking in grace and elasticity.

What are the causes leading up to this great prevalence of knock-knees in girls? Why are boys not markedly knock-kneed, too? Because boys are

sturdier, by virtue, first, of greater freedom in out-of-door life. A healthy-minded youngster, no matter how feeble his body may be, insists on playing out of doors with "the other fellers." No greater punishment can be meted out to a boy than confinement to the house. Joyful exercise, with fresh air and sunlight—but joyful exercise in any weather—is the best prescription to follow in building up a healthy body.

Next in importance is proper food. A boy's tastes and appetite are more simple than a girl's. He prefers plain fare and plenty of it. Then, too, his digestion is better. The amount of food an active, growing boy "puts away" in the course of a day is enormous, but in his system oxidation is so rapid that food is assimilated. It is burned up very quickly and converted into blood. There is, as a rule, not a sluggish cell in his body, so waste, repair, and growth keep up a happy cycle. Sometimes he shoots up a bit too fast, and may for a time outgrow his strength, but nature takes care of that, and in a short time, with an interval of enforced rest, there is a readjustment.

To these two great essentials—joyful

out-of-door life and proper nourishment—must be added proper clothing. Here again the boy has the advantage, for, from shoes to hat, his clothing is merely a covering to hide his naked-

ness. He is never conscious of his clothes. They never interfere or obtrude upon his joy of life in any manner whatsoever, and he sheds them with the same aplomb and abandon, when he gets a chance, as a bird sheds its feathers. Of course we are thinking only of healthy-minded boys. There are all sorts, and some do not fit this description at all.

Could girls share the freedom of their brothers to some extent, they would be healthier in body and mind. The self-consciousness of girls has much to do with their physical imperfections. This causes them, aside from many other things to which it gives rise, to assume peculiar attitudes, to strike ridiculous poses, and to throw the body out of plumb, under the mistaken belief, too, that such distort-



Cultivating Knock-Knee!

tions add to their attractions.

When a boy is forced to carry his schoolbooks—he is usually not given to poring over his studies—he throws them over his shoulders and lets his

back carry the burden. A girl naturally hooks her arm and, by resting the weight on one hip, throws her entire body out of alignment, both knees being forced inward. And this is only one of many positions that she maintains throughout her entire formative life which are calculated to bring about the condition of knock-knees. It does more than this, however. It depresses one shoulder and elevates the other, it affects the hip in a similar manner, and tends to unhinge the spinal vertebrae.

Spinal curvatures are very rarely seen at birth. A baby's spine is a straight rod, but as the child assumes the sitting or erect posture, curves which are recognized as normal ones develop. When an infant's back is unsupported, or when it is propped up in a sitting position before it is strong enough to assume this posture *voluntarily*, slight deviations that go unnoticed may occur and cause trouble later on in life.

Weak muscles, careless postures, the prolonged retention of positions that cause abnormal curves of the spine and paralysis of certain groups of spinal muscles, are causes of spinal curvatures in neglected children.

The condition known as rotary lateral curvature is particularly common among young adolescent girls. One of the chief causes is weak musculature due to faulty diet and lack of proper exercise and correct hygiene generally. Of course there are many other causes, especially in working girls who are forced to maintain vicious positions for hours at a time, thereby weakening groups of supporting muscles and ligaments. Girls who, at a tender age, act as nursemaids, and carry a lively baby about all day on one hip, or who are used as household drudges, almost always develop lateral curvature of the spine.

Round shoulders and hollow backs are more common in adults than in the

young, although round back does occur in children troubled with rickets. A faulty position while at work is the main cause in middle life. The segments of the upper spine may even become completely ossified in advanced cases of round shoulders. This condition is frequently seen in the aged, who, through increasing debility or through carelessness in walking correctly, gradually bend forward until they seem bowed down with a "weight of woe." Because this position stifles the lungs and brings on respiratory difficulties, besides other organic troubles, it should be rigidly guarded against. There is nothing more attractive than dignified old age. One who has reached three-score and ten with erect shoulders and an elastic step excites our admiration and inspires our homage.

Hollow back is only too common, especially in working women and those who have had many pregnancies. Carrying heavy weights on the head is another cause. Superabundant abdominal weight is always accompanied by hollow back.

Many slight deviations from the normal go unnoticed. Often a dressmaker is the first to recognize that the skirt measurement is longer on one side than on the other, or the distance from armhole to waist shorter, or she may be unable to fit the back owing to a projecting shoulder blade. Even so, with an elevated shoulder, prominent hip, or sharp shoulder blade, the real trouble may not be suspected. We are not dealing here with *diseases* of the bones, and so pain is usually absent, although backache often exists, especially in neurasthenic girls; but when allowed to go uncorrected, these defects are apt to give trouble in later life when *shrinkage* occurs. The *postural* defects sometimes become *structural*.

The importance of the feet as a factor in maintaining the proper poise and balance of the body is not sufficiently

appreciated. It was a profane remark of Savarin, the French gourmand, that among the works of creation the design of the human foot was a conspicuous failure. History does not relate the condition of *his* feet, but that can be left to the imagination! Broken-down arches frequently result from excessive body weight. Those who *stand*—not walk or run—for hours at a time—dentists, waiters, chambermaids, nurses, saleswomen, and so forth—suffer from flatfoot. Young girls with weak muscles and relaxed tendons are especially prone to this tendency. A well-known authority expresses the belief that weak feet and ankles cause more than one-half the physical imperfections in young women. If so, this is a serious matter.

It is extremely bad to shift the weight of the body from one painful foot to another. The common method of reducing the weight on the feet by tightly laced shoes around the ankles is also bad; shoes made to support the ankles are worse than useless, as constriction *impairs* the muscles. When restraint is removed and large shoes are worn, pain may be the immediate result, but after that relief follows. In all such conditions it is obvious that the weak tissues cannot support the body weight; a third prop, then, in the form of a cane should always be resorted to whenever possible, and on every opportunity the feet should be rested, if only for a few minutes.

Weak ankles and feet can be straightened by daily massage to stimulate the circulation, and by raising and lowering the body on the toes, as shown in the illustration. The support of a chair may be necessary for beginners, but after a while the body can be balanced for some time, and toe walking may even be practiced as the tissues gain strength. Throwing the body upon the heels relieves the soft tissues and explains why walking up an incline or uphill, and climbing, are fine exercises

for overcoming foot and ankle weakness.

By making these useful members as strong as possible, the lines of the body generally will be vastly improved. Bowlegs and knock-knees can be cured in young children by means of very simple apparatus, but in more advanced cases surgical interference is necessary.



An exercise to strengthen the ankles and feet.

The prevention of spinal deviations is extremely important. Gymnastic exercises and caution to assume correct postures, whether at school or at work, should be enforced. Even the slightest deviations should be treated, as they can be cured, and there is always the danger that they may grow worse. The use of dumb-bells, Indian clubs, and massage are valuable in developing the muscles. A weak skeletal

frame can be made strong with a proper diet, as remarked before.

But a proper diet and an abundance of joyous exercise in God's out of doors make an irresistible combination, before which every physical weakness must succumb.

Answers to Queries.

OTTAWA.—I am sorry your request came too late for the May issue. To make "beet rouge," select a half dozen ruby-ripe beets, chop them fine, and put through a fruit press. To one ounce of the pure juice add one-half ounce of alcohol, or white wine. Let stand for several days, and then strain through filter paper. Keep in a glass-stoppered bottle. When using, saturate a small wad of absorbent cotton with the liquid, and dilute this with a little water until you get the right shade for your skin.

SUNNYSIDE.—A young woman who had a persistent falling of the hair that threatened baldness practically cured it by washing her hair twice a day with soap and then rubbing kerosene vigorously into the bald patches. They soon became covered with soft hairs, and by the end of eight months were long enough to dress. These measures are vigorous, although very simple and within the reach of every one.

MARY JANE.—The use of a good face powder is not injurious if cold cream is rubbed into the skin first, and the powder then lightly dusted on, not *rubbed* into the pores. The kind of powder to use depends on your coloring. Further advice as to powders is available if you wish it.

BETH.—The best remedy for bleeding at the nose is a vigorous motion of the jaws, as if in chewing. In the case of a child, a wad of paper should be inserted and chewed hard. It is the motion of the jaws that stops the bleeding. The remedy is very simple, but has never been known to fail.

GUARDIAN.—In the opinion of many physicians, those afflicted with the habit of biting the nails show symptoms of undergrowth, are often slow, unreliable, and have defective teeth. There are exceptions, of course. Painting the nails and the tissues around them with tincture of quassia has brought good results. Try this, and if the girl is

otherwise in need of building up, feed her on good, plain fare, and keep her in the fresh air and sunshine.

DISTRESS.—The condition of the eyes and lids you speak of is, as you say, ruinous to your looks. I cannot understand why the treatment you have been receiving does no good. Have you carefully looked over your general health? You may have obstinate constipation. Crusts on the eyelashes are really a form of dandruff. For the red lids, you need an eye wash, and for the scaliness an ointment. I will send you an appropriate treatment on proper application, but in the meantime must warn you that vicious habits of diet and physical neglect express themselves outwardly in various ways, and your trouble is one way.

ALKA.—Lemon juice will remove stains from the hands and nails. For stubborn stains, pumice stone, moistened and rubbed over the parts, is effective. Powdered pumice stone and lemon juice combined will root any stain, if it is not of an indelible character.

CUBAN BOY.—Your diet and entire mode of living need correction before you can conquer the facial blemishes you decry so bitterly. By complying with the rules of this department, directions for the cure of pimples and blackheads, and suggestions as to general hygienic measures, may be had.

GRANDMOTHER.—Indeed, wrinkles are amenable to treatment, but I cannot give full directions in this small space. Send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope, and be a little more explicit as to your needs, and I will gladly advise you. Have you read the article published in the April, 1914, number of this magazine entitled, "Making Age Attractive"?

MARRIED.—You are not the only one whose taste in dress irritates your "better half." It is a large subject, but a few rules carefully followed will transform you from a "dowdy" into a well-dressed woman. "Beauty Hints in Dress" is available to you and to any other reader who feels in need of a few suggestions on so interesting a theme.

GWEN.—Smallpox scars and acne pits can be treated at home; perhaps not as successfully as by a professional, but professional treatments are very expensive, and it will do no harm to try what you can do. Send for directions.

Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.

VALESKA SURATT'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE TO

Readers of Smith's Magazine

Revealing Secrets That Have Made Her One of the Most Beautiful
of Screen Actresses

By VALESKA SURATT

GETTING down to "brass tacks" is mighty good business—sometimes.

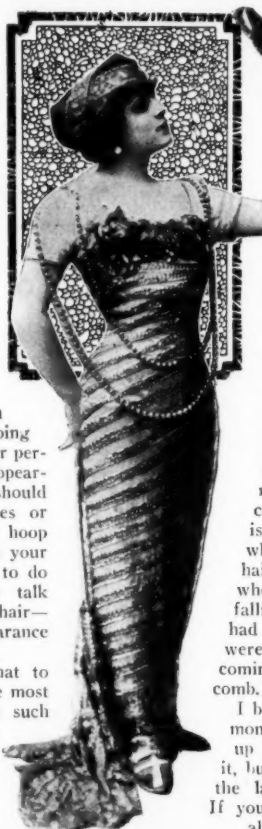
Remember when father used to use that brass-tack tone of voice, and we wondered if he knew just how bad our school report was or if mother had told him how long we sat out on the porch last night with Jack? The same "jumpy" feeling came in our throats a few years later, when hubby got down to brass tacks about that bill for the new spring bonnet.

Now don't get scared, girls, I'm not going to scold you for your school reports, for holding hands, or for not being able to resist that peachy spring bonnet.

Not I, because I plead guilty on all those counts myself. But I am going to get down to brass tacks about your personal appearance. By personal appearance I don't mean whether you should wear a short skirt and high shoes or whether you should wear the new hoop skirt and low shoes. That's up to your individual taste. What I do want to do is have a real serious, chummy talk with you about the care of your hair—your complexion—your facial appearance in general.

I want to impress upon you that to neglect your appearance is about the most foolish thing you can do, because such neglect will some day make you very unhappy. I want you to try my formulas that I know, from personal experience, are truly and remarkably effective. They are easy to prepare, and the cost is so reasonable that you cannot afford to miss the opportunity.

I had a great many failures before I struck the right thing. Whether you are satisfied with what you are using now or not, just try one of these formulas, and I am sure you will agree with me that they surpass anything you have ever used. The simple ingredients for making up these formulas can be



VALESKA SURATT
She has her own ideas about
Beauty Making that have
made her famous.

obtained at drug stores and many department stores.

Try these first, and if you cannot obtain them easily, write to my secretary in Chicago, whose address you will find later on, and you will be supplied quickly, by return mail, at the same cost which you would have to pay the druggist.

Now let's get down to the brass tacks. Suppose we start with the hair. Making the hair grow was a great problem to me. Thick bunches of hair would come out on my comb. I really feared baldness. Finally I came to the inevitable conclusion that the hair must have nourishment instead of mere stimulation to keep it in good condition. With this proper nourishment, it is remarkable indeed what results may be accomplished in hair growth. I have known cases where, as a result, hair would stop falling after a certain formula of mine had been used only a few days. There were no more thick strands of hair coming out and entangling itself on the comb.

I believe I could make a great deal of money with this formula by putting it up in form ready to use, and selling it, but I am content to give it here for the lasting benefit of all womankind. If you will be faithful in its use, and, above all, use it liberally, I know you will be mighty glad you read this little chat.

In making up this formula yourself at home in a few moments, you save over a pint of this unexcelled hair tonic. This would cost about two dollars at the stores, so you see how economical this formula is to you—and it gives real results, besides. Simply mix half a pint of alcohol with the

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.

same amount of water, or, if you prefer, use a pint of bay rum and add one ounce of beta quinol. The beta quinol will cost you fifty cents at any drug store. In applying this, simply pour a little in a small glass or eyecup, and then dip a toothbrush into the tonic and apply to the scalp, rubbing freely. The toothbrush should be used for no other purpose, of course—or any small brush will do. In this way it will take you but a couple of minutes to go over the scalp thoroughly. Do this every day.

Now, there's another important point about hair health. This is a cleanly scalp. When oily accumulations and scurf form on the scalp, as they always do, the vigor of hair roots is affected. Soap and brush will not completely dissolve these accumulations. Here is a suggestion: Dissolve a teaspoonful of eggol in a cup of hot water. Apply to the hair for a head wash. Use like any ordinary shampoo.

You will be astonished how wonderfully clean the hair and scalp will be, every particle of scurf and dirt eliminated from the smallest pores. This allows the hair tonic given above to produce its results more quickly and decisively. At the drug store you can get enough eggol for twenty-five cents to give you a dozen delightful shampoos.

As for wrinkles—I used to look upon them much as the drying of an apple skin foretells the passing of youth that can never return. Since I have worked out for myself the problem of ridding myself of these check marks of nature's bookkeeper, I have changed my mind. I think there is no excuse nowadays for the presence of wrinkles. Results from the use of my wrinkle formula have proven this to be true.

I want every girl and woman who reads SMITH'S MAGAZINE to try this formula: Into a bowl pour half a pint of hot water. Add slowly two ounces of eptol and stir constantly until it begins to cream. Remove from the fire and add a tablespoonful of glycerin, stirring until cold. This will give you a large quantity of fine, white, satiny cream. Use it freely and your face will resume the freshness and vigor of youth. Enough eptol to make the above formula will cost you only fifty cents at any first-class drug or department store. Lines of age, crow's feet, the flabbiness of the flesh, all will be replaced by a plump fullness. I mean it will absolutely do this very thing if you are faithful, and, above all, liberal in its use.

Now for the complexion. This was another hard nut to crack, because everything I had previously used seemed to take an age to produce even the slightest result. Finally I hit upon a formula which I prize among my greatest—it is indeed a jewel. This must be used very liberally and every day—twice a day, if possible. You will find it economical enough to do this, and you will succeed. Besides, it is very simple to make, and takes but a few moments. Here it is: Bring a pint of water to the boiling point. Add slowly one ounce of zintone, and stir until all is dissolved. Then add two tablespoonfuls of glycerin. Fifty cents' worth of zintone will make a pint of this excellent beauty cream.

There is no reason for having a sallow, muddy, spotty complexion. This gives a most adorable purity to the complexion, your mirror will make you happy, and you will realize I have given you something really worth while.

To remove blackheads, big and little, get some powdered norexin from your druggist for about

fifty cents. Sprinkle a little on a hot, wet sponge, and rub briskly for a minute or two over the blackheads. You will be surprised how they will disappear in a few minutes. It is injurious to the skin to try to pick out or sweat out blackheads. Sweating makes the pores large. The method I suggest is entirely unique, and works in a few moments.

There is nothing that will remove superfluous hair so magically and so perfectly as sulfo solution. It simply dissolves the hair instead of burning it off like pastes and powders, and will not redden, irritate, or injure the skin. It can be used on the tenderest parts of the body. It removes all the superfluous hairs perfectly, whether heavy or bristly, and leaves the skin soft and smooth. No one can tell you have used a depilatory. You can secure sulfo solution for one dollar from your druggist. There is nothing else that will actually dissolve hair away. This will, and it is safe.

I have tried a great many kinds of face powder, and with poor satisfaction. I finally worked out one of my own, that is now sold by most department and drug stores and known as the Valeska Suratt Face Powder, at fifty cents for an extra-large box in flesh, white, or brunette. You will notice the extraordinary fineness of this powder. It is unlike nearly all others I have ever used, being entirely free from chalkiness and being "invisible" when applied. It gives, for this reason, a charm to the skin almost impossible to produce by any other face powder I know.

In closing, I want to call your attention to the coupon below, which I asked to be added to this article, because if no drug store is convenient, or if your druggist happens not to have the articles you want on hand, it will be easier for you to send the coupon instead of writing a letter. I have arranged to have a supply of each of the necessary articles on hand to supply those who cannot reach a drug or department store to get them. Simply cut out the coupon below, fill in with your name and address, indicate what articles you want, inclose the price, and mail it to "Secretary to Valeska Suratt, 393 Thompson Bldg., Chicago, Ill."

Last, but not least, I want to give you an unusual opportunity to get a new and extraordinary perfume. It happens to be named after me, but I think it is worthy of my friends, so delicate, so lasting, so new and uniquely fascinating in scent, "Valeska Suratt Perfume." If you will send only fifty cents to the address given here, a full-size \$1.00 bottle of this surpassing perfume will be sent you at once.

I feel now I have done my part in aiding thousands of my sisters in attaining the charms they all have a right to have, a skin adorable, queenly hair, and an unspeakable atmosphere of elegance and sweetness. Always yours,

VALESKA SURATT.

**Secretary to VALESKA SURATT,
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Please send me, at once, transportation paid, the following articles, for which I enclose the sum of

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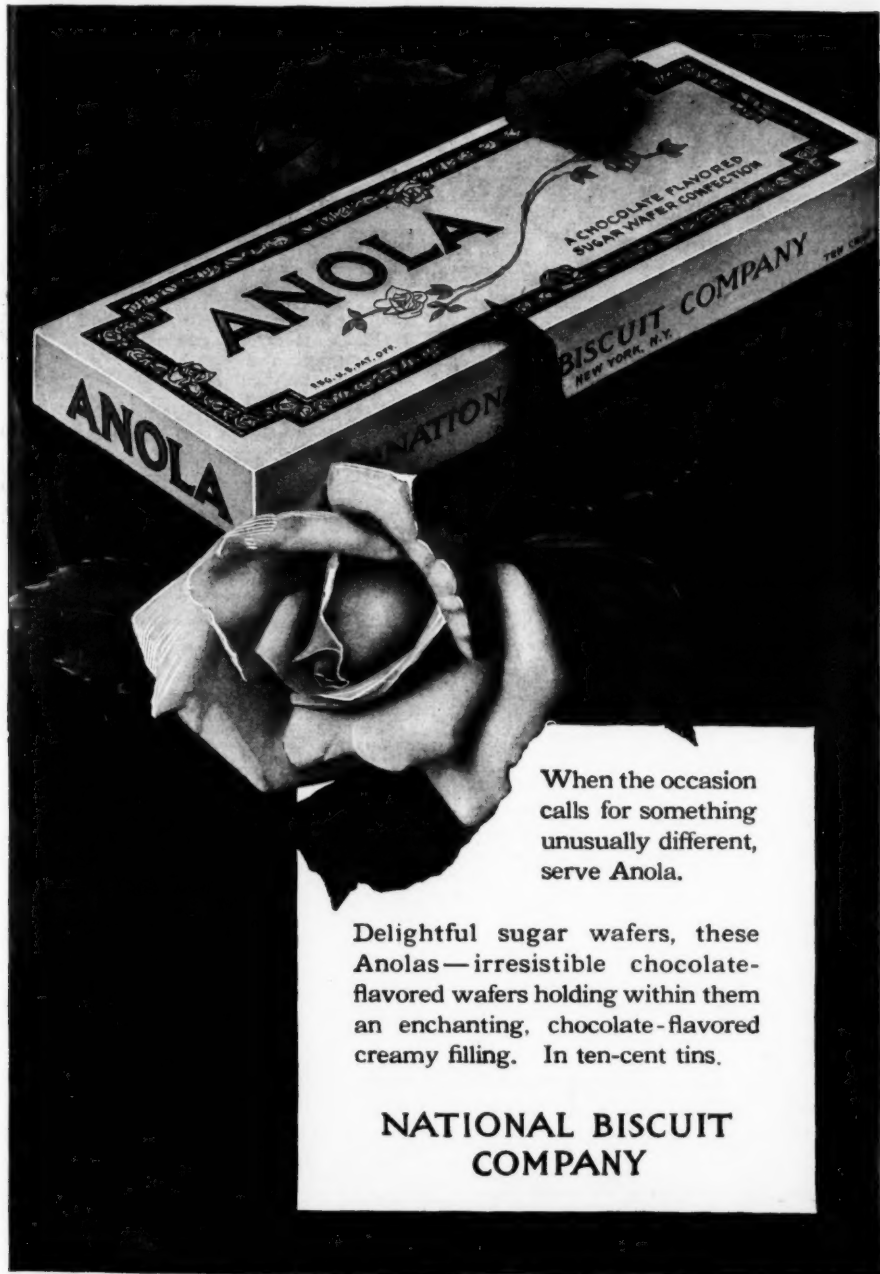
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State of New York, County of New York, (ss.)

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared George C. Smith, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposor and says that he is one of the publishers of SMITH'S MAGAZINE, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication, for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publishers, Street & Smith, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; editor, Charles A. MacLean, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; managing editors, Street & Smith, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; business managers, Street & Smith, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: Smith Publishing House, 81 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y., a firm, composed of Ormond G. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; George C. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Cora A. Gould, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of bona fide owners; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

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of the firm of Street & Smith, publisher.

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